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Volume 3 • Issue 12 • November 1998

PS Extreme

THE PLAYER'S UNOFFICIAL MONTHLY GUIDE TO THE PLAYSTATION



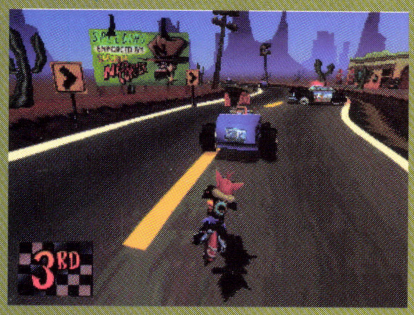
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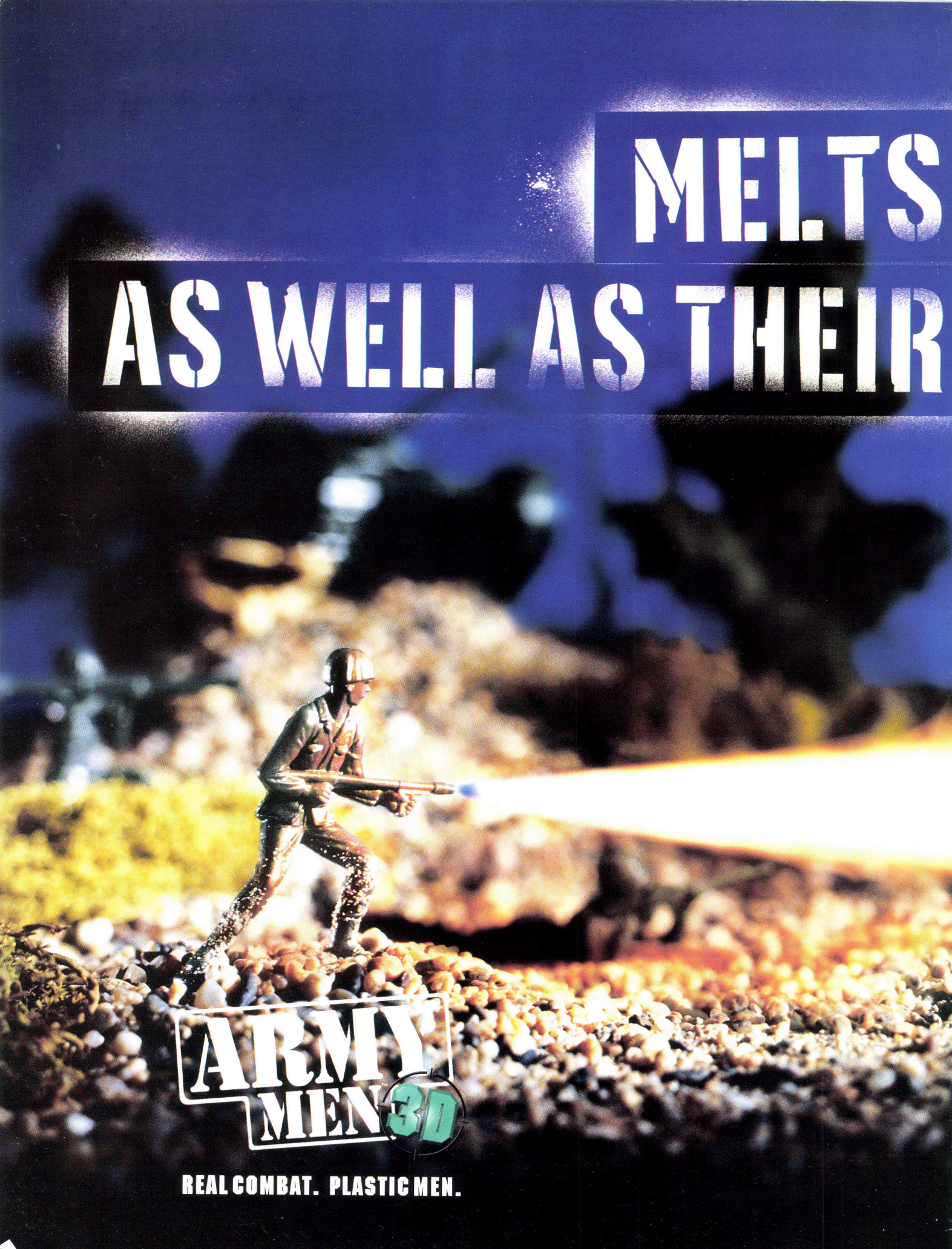
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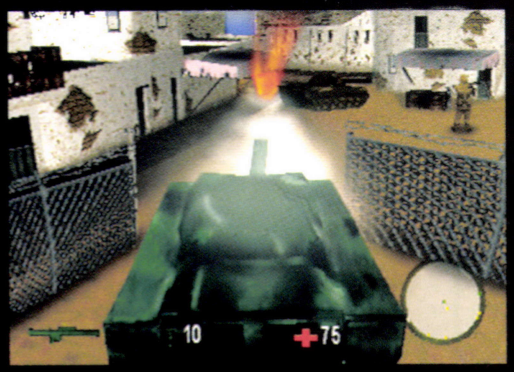
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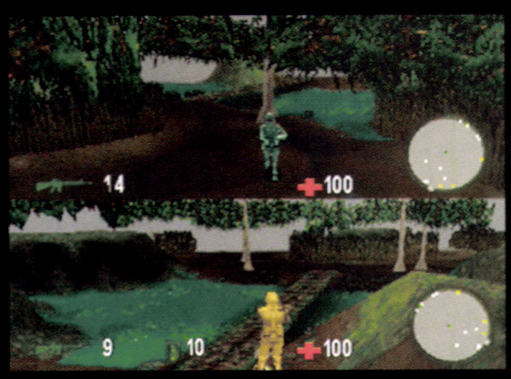

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RATING PENDING
RP
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

VOLUME 3 • ISSUE 12
NOVEMBER 1998

EXnews:> p16
Eidos buys Crystal but passes on Psygnosis, 989 Busts a Move or two, Superman is sighted on PSX, we reveal Konami's plans through the end of the century, Infogrames makes TV and we tell the truth about PSX2, all in the news this month.

EXcessory:> p20
We've got hardware reviews. Send more hardware! Send more hardware!

EXecute:> p24
Codes, hints, tips, cheats, chickens, tips, cheats, hints, tips.

EXclusive:> p30
More exclusive noise and info from the top publisher of such things, us. Thank you, thank you very much.

EXtreme:> p48
Number Five is alive! Test Drive, caffeine, adrenaline and attitude... these are the things that make happiness happen.

EXpecting:> p52
Four out of five gaming magazine publishers surveyed admit to reading our magazine while perched upon the porcelain pedestal. What's that got to do with previews? Nothing, but it was kinda interesting.

SPorts:> p63
Our brand spankin' new sports section makes it's debut, in this, the thirty-sixth issue of PSExtreme! Bravo! (Hey, we knew Eric had to be good for something.)

EXrated:> p78
Damn!! We love rating the games. Send more software!

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EDITORIAL RAMBLINGS

I guess I'm feeling a little melancholy this month due to the fact that this is our 36th issue of PSExtreme. If you break it down, that's three years of publishing a magazine totally dedicated to one amazing system and a whole lot of games. Of course, putting together a magazine every 30 days isn't a one man job. Every name you see in the masthead below plays an integral part in ensuring that you are kept well-informed, completely entertained and experience a good read with each and every issue.

When we decided to produce a monthly, PlayStation-specific magazine back in 1995, we knew we were taking a gamble. Back then, successful platform-specific books were almost unheard of. Choosing to create a magazine that dealt specifically with Sony and the PlayStation, which were unproven entities in the challenging video game hardware business, was an exciting decision that we have obviously never once regretted. In addition to the PlayStation being one of the best pieces of video game machinery ever constructed, the people who run the show over at Sony Computer Entertainment America are the coolest, nicest and all-around friendliest group of people we've ever had the pleasure of knowing. While I won't make this editorial into a drawn-out Oscar list, I would like to thank all of the people over at 919 East Hillsdale Blvd., as well as the numerous third-party companies who have consistently supported us and our vision, and have strived to make our jobs easier — you know who you are and we appreciate it.

As far as the issue at hand, it's jam-packed with lots of cool shots and info. You'll find exclusive, hands-on impressions of 989's Twisted Metal 3, Crystal's Akuji the Heartless, Koei's Destrega and yes, more Metal Gear Solid (unfortunately it wasn't quite reviewable at press time). Our cover story features Accolade's awesome racing sequel, Test Drive 5, and we've added a dedicated sports section which will be found in every issue. In addition to the codes, previews and peripheral reviews, head for the EXrated section to find out the scores on games like MediEvil, Unholy War, Rogue Trip and Rival Schools. I'm afraid I'm going to have to apologize right now to the numerous companies whose games we couldn't fit into this issue. The fourth quarter floodgates have sprung wide-open and there just isn't enough time and space to get all of the reviews in. Rest assured, we will cover all of the holiday releases between now and the January issue in time to make all of your key holiday-buying decisions.

Speaking of the holidays, keep your eye out for our Holiday Buyer's Guide next month. Like last year, it will give you all the scoop on which games you should consider for your wish-lists, and it will be loosely bound into the magazine so you can pull it out and take it with you to your local video game retailer — how cool is that!?!

Well, we'll be back in another thirty days — see you then.

GREG
OFF@QUAKE.NET

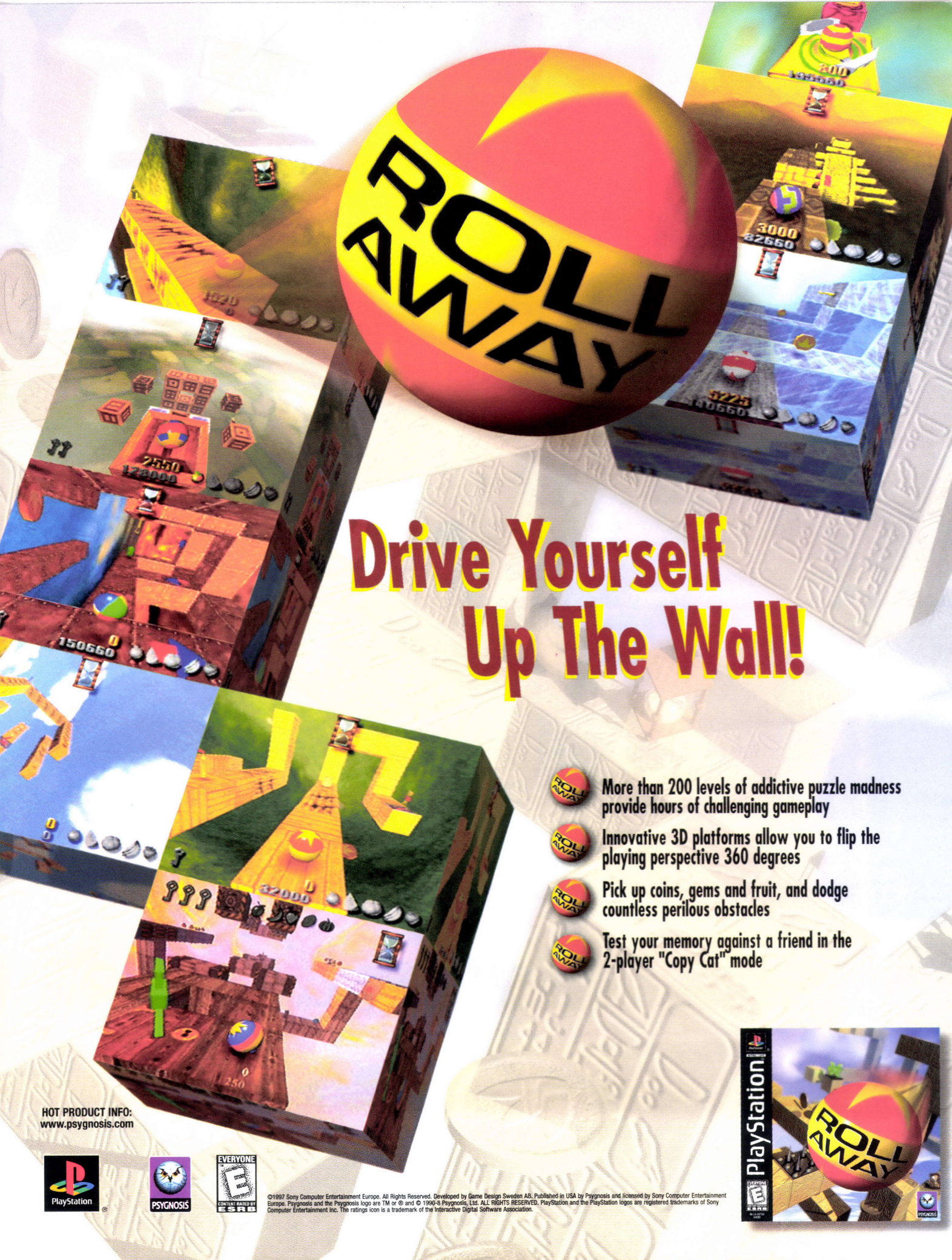
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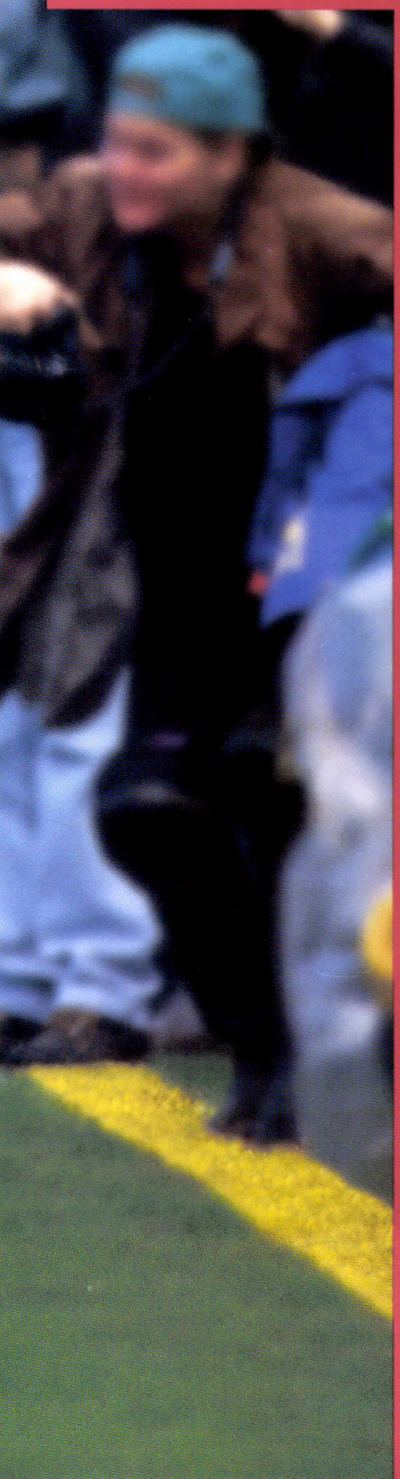
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HE WENT 92 YARDS, BROKE TWO TACKLES, JUKED ONE CORNER AND BLEW THE NUMBERS OFF THE FREE SAFETY. C'MON, LET THE GUY DANCE.

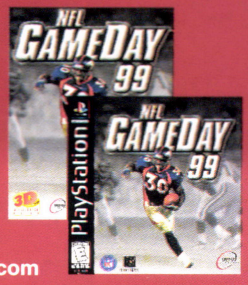


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To the publishers of PSExtreme,

I think that your magazine is a rip-off. For a magazine that costs 9.99 (Canadian), you guys sure don't have much to offer other than a demo disc.
You guys have an average cover that could be lost among the other video game magazines out there. Also, your layouts for each page are so boring! Fire your graphic designer and get a better one.
You guys don't have anything different to offer in your magazine that can be found in other magazines. If a demo disc is the best you can offer then you wouldn't be around for much longer.

m_simbajon

It sounds like you're one confused Canadian. Our price is $6.50 Canadian, not $9.99, and our layouts are awesome. Let's see... what magazine could you be confusing us with? ... what other PlayStation magazine is $9.99 Canadian and comes with a demo disc and boring pages? ... hmmmm...

Dear PSExtreme,

I'm a long-time reader, but this is the first time I've written to you guys! (I know you get this a lot... but... I love your magazine!) Anyways, my letter here concerns the issue of "video game piracy". I myself am a collector of such games! It's because of the "contacts" I have in such countries such as Hong Kong, Thailand and the Philippines, that I'm able to have great games such as Tekken 3 or Tobal 2 for only $3.00! I also like to go down to my local Blockbuster Video, rent games, copy them then return them the very same day! I mean, it's because of doing this I was able to obtain an awesome game such as Turbo Prop Racing for under $5.00! So for all you PlayStation gamers who are thinking of getting your PlayStation "chipped", here's one of the reasons to do so! So, in closing, I would like to ask, how do companies such as Namco, Konami, Capcom, Nintendo and Sony intend on stopping us bootleggers from obtaining such games? Do what you can! You will never stop us! Heh! Heh! Heh! Heh! Heh!... we are everywhere! Ha! Ha! Ha! Ha! Ha! Ha!

The "true" PlayStation underground.

That's just so sad. You're actually proud of your worthless collection of pirated games? Sony and all the other companies don't need to do anything to stop you. You probably wouldn't buy the games in the first place, so who cares if you blow your $10.00 allowance on worthless plastic discs. There's more than enough honest, hard working people who know what they're paying for... Real collectors buy original games, with quality packaging, instruction manuals, a warranty, customer service, and real sense of self-respect — not cheap reproductions that have zero resale value. There's ten times more pride in a shelf full of real games than a garage full of ugly, generic bootlegs. Get real.

Dear PSExtreme,

The truth about the Capcom Generations cancellations.
First, a disclaimer. This is hearsay, and I cannot guarantee it's correct (although I strongly believe it is). Nonetheless, I thought it should be passed along, as I recently posted it on rec.games.video.sony:
You heard it here first. SCEA apparently doesn't want 'crap' like this polluting the US game market. Lately, I've been placing a few calls with Capcom's customer service lines trying to find out the reason behind the "indefinite postponement" of the Ghosts 'N Goblins and 1942 Collections. The first two times I got a phone rep that didn't know much about video games and Capcom's products. The first didn't even know what Capcom Generations is, and the second, while acknowledging the titles, could not give a reason for the delays. But I figured I might eventually get a well informed phone rep, and third time was the charm. I was told that Capcom would love to release these games in the US, but in what appears to be a recurring theme with Capcom and SCEA, the games were not approved. The rep expressed hope that something can be worked out, after all, Mega Man 8 and Mega Man X4 were both initially rejected as well. Albeit somewhat jokingly, I was told that "Maybe we can put a 3D intro in there or something." Here's hoping everything works out.

Azrael1744

We can confirm that SCEA rejected the concept of Capcom Generations. The inside scoop is that they told Capcom they would approve a "Generations" disc if all the games were on one disc, instead of the Ghouls 'n Ghosts series on one and the 19XX series on another. Capcom refused and that's that. They will, however, be released outside the U.S.

Dear PSExtreme,

First the suckup sentence. I love your magazine! It's the best magazine I've ever seen in my life.
A little advice for others who don't know the power of PSExtreme: I was in disagreement with the review of Rally Cross (yeah, I know, one year ago)... I remembered that the problem was the control. In other magazines, they gave it just two points down in the control. So, I decided to rent the game and see who had the truth. To my surprise, PSExtreme was the one with the truth. So, I had never again questioned PSExtreme.
Also I was gonna ask about something that bothers me to ask... Miaka (hey, it's not every day you see a girl in the gaming industry that is full of old people like you at PSExtreme (just kidding!)). I am asking about personal things... age, birthplace, birthday, a photo, marital status, you know the thing baby! And who is the geek with Scully?! If you didn't want to put a big dope with her you should have called me and taken the photo! Geezz!
I am with Chris about Vigilante 8. I was expecting the 70's feel. I'd still give it a higher score though, because the speed and replay value, etc, etc, kick ass.

Your Friend,
Joel A. Rivera

Ohhh, you're hot for Miaka are you? She was born on Feb 19th, in Hong Kong. She's single and she's 21. You better watch out though, 'cause she's got the hots for Shaggy, and he's one badass mofo with tatoos and everything.

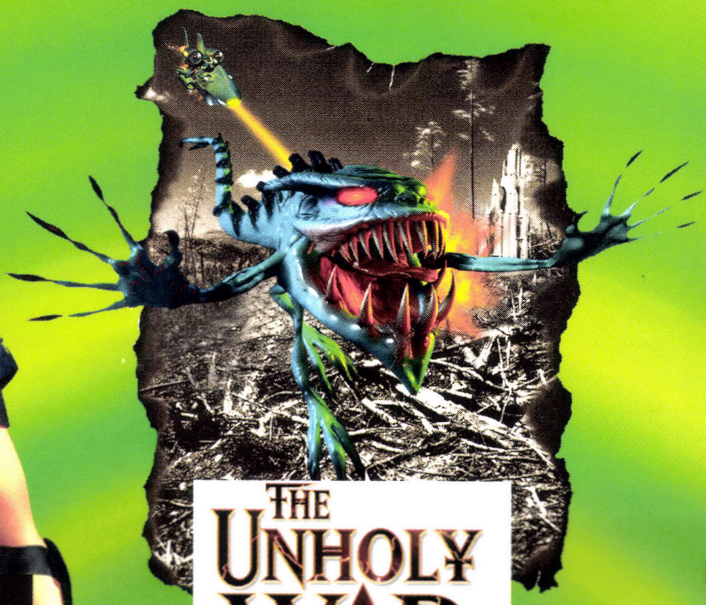


Secret picture taken of Miaka and Shaggy sharing an intimate moment.

Dear PSExtreme,

Buyers beware!! I had recently purchased a Rapid Fire Gamepad controller from Interact that turned out to be a defective product! My PlayStation was ruined! I spoke with the boys @ the PlayStation Hotline and they asked me what kind of controller I was using. They also asked if it had the "PS" symbol on it, which it didn't have. They told me it possibly could have been the controller that ruined the machine.
The machine was not acknowledging the memory card being inside the port. The original Sony controller followed suit. I send







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EIDOS INTERACTIVE

the controller by Interact and my PlayStation in for repairs, $70.00!!
Thank goodness it was only the surge protector that went and not the entire thing!
Sony also sent a letter to me stating that my warranty had been reactivated and that controller was never tested. I was then reimbursed by Interact for everything!
So consumers, always purchase the products with the "PS" symbol on them or you might be taking a big risk! I certainly learned my lesson.

Jeff Magnussen,
Bainbridge, N.Y.

Thanks for sharing that important information with us, Jeff. That's right, folks, be smart! Buy Sony approved products or you'll be sorry!

Dear PSExtreme,

Yeah, I love your mag blah blah blah. I just want to see a whole lotta mo sports game previews and reviews. Games like ESPN's National Hockey Night and NBA Tonight. Mostly all of the hockey games though because without hockey the summer seems long. When you DO have articles on sports games they are always well written and in-depth. I love the sports games, almost as much as I love everybody at PSExtreme.

Sincerely,
1HOCKEYNUT

You must have ESPN.

Dear PSExtreme,

Hey there ultro-maggers! Do you have any idea about these rumors I've heard about the second playstation? An inferior magazine has stated that the playstation "next" may use Minidisc technology instead of memory cards, is any of this true?
SUCKUP:
You rock, you're the greatest, I bow in allegiance, let me get you a drink so that you may use my back as a table to rest it on while sitting in MY house watching MY TV playing MY playstation and laughing at me as you kick my now limp body around the room.
There.
Yours in undying loyalty,

Graeme Schwindt

You nut. Inferior? Wasn't that the OFFICIAL PlayStation magazine that said that? Well then, it must be true! But seriously, nothing on the future hardware from Sony has been finalized. Until you see a press release on Sony letterhead, anything you read is pure speculation. (See EXNEWS this issue.)

Dear PSExtreme,

Being a 53 year old gamer (heavy duty) since the days of Intellivision & a very heavy duty PlayStation fanatic, I want to know why in the name of Lara Croft isn't there a Horse Racing title in the U.S.?
In Japan there is Gallop Racer I & II, King of Stallions, Victorious Thoroughbreds & at least another 10 more titles, if not more.
What's the problem here? Tecmo told me they submitted Gallop Racer II to Sony (previous release dates were 12/97 & 7/98) and there still is no response as to whether Sony will let it be released.
Horse Racing is slightly popular here in the states, whereas Soccer (how many on the PSX, 20?) isn't half as big as far as I'm concerned.
YOUR MAG RULES

Edward J

Alright people now, there's only one thing that's going to get Sony to let a horse racing game come out on the PlayStation... a massive email & letter campaign. Send your email to webmaster@playstation.sony.com and send your letters to:
Sony Computer Entertainment America
919 E. Hillsdale Blvd., 2nd Floor
Foster City, CA 94404
Let's get Gallop!!!

Dear PSExtreme,

Hey, how's it goin? Well, I just want to say that I agree with most of your reviews, and I like the system you follow. But I want to say that you should have given the game Saga Frontier a lower score than an 87%. When I first bought the game in July, I really enjoyed it, and being an avid RPG player, I was fixed on finishing the game with all 7 characters. But as time when on, and I beat the game with 4 of the characters, I soon got bored of it. Even though each of the characters has a different story, the game is way too repetitive. I always found myself leveling up in some dungeon for the next big battle. I bought the strategy guide, hoping it would pump me up and help me finish the game entirely, but it didn't work. I spent hour upon hour trying for the Dream Super Combo, and not once did I get it in 5 straight hours of leveling up with that character, and I beat the last boss easily without any DSG. When I started to play the game with the fifth character, I became immensely bored in a quick time, and turned the game off, forever. I always wanted to see the special ending when you beat it with everyone, but I just didn't care anymore. Maybe I'll get back to it in a couple of years. I guess I'm just saying that if you are a really psycho, live-for-RPG gamer and don't mind repetitiveness, then go ahead and pick it up. But if not, then leave it alone. My score: very low 80's or high 70's.
Last thing before I stop.
I totally agree with your rating on Bio FREAKS. The game blows alright. I rented it, seeing the commercials and thinking, "cool, shoot guns and throw your enemies into fans!". I got home and played it, and even though the first couple of MINUTES were kinda cool, the game soon got entirely too hard, to the point of impossible, in my opinion. The gameplay was totally bogus, the first few enemies were ok to fight, but when you got further along the line of baddies, they would do the same move over and over and over and over again! I hate that. The stories for the characters were cool, but the gameplay and difficulty needed work. I totally agree with your 65%. Good job with your magazine and I wish you success in the future, even though I don't have a subscription, I can sometimes read my Grandpa's. Thanks for your time.

dan-o316

Thanks for the kind words. We really appreciate it when people agree with our reviews, but we also respect them if they don't. We never claim to be all-seeing, all-knowing demi-gods of review. We just give our every-day Joe writers a game and publish their honest thoughts and insights about the game and if we don't happen to agree with one of our reviewers' opinion, we fire 'em or change their score. ;-) (No, not really.)

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PlayStation Gaming News

From Around The Globe

EIDOS AND CRYSTAL DEAL GOLDEN...

Acquisition-hungry Eidos Interactive (you may have heard of them, they have a game called "Tomb Raider") has been on the warpath lately, snapping up developers here and there in a move to bolster the company's overall game catalog. After weeks of rumors floating through the game industry, Eidos struck a deal with Crystal Dynamics, folding the company within their corporate arms for a deal rumored to be worth 47.5 million dollars. Crystal D has been up for grabs for some time now and it's good to see the development house find a solid home. Crystal is especially happy with the deal, not only because they're now locked into the Eidos massive distribution network, but because Eidos has promised them continued freedom both on the marketing side as well as in their development. Eidos gains the growing Gex line, as well as access to the incredible new Legacy of Kain: Soul Reaver.

...WHILE THE EIDOS AND PSYGNOSIS DEAL FIZZLES

Sony-owned Psygnosis was also rumored to be up on the block (again), with Eidos being the front-runner candidate to pick up the UK developer's assets. The Sony-Psygnosis relationship (best described as "strained") has been on shaky footing for well over a year, as Psygnosis struggles to find the right niche for themselves and their products. Unfortunately, poor sales on leading titles like Colony Wars, G-Police and Rascal have kept the company's profits down. Eidos, looking to consolidate their UK distribution, was interested in Psygnosis and their standings in England, but the deal ultimately fizzled. Shortly after announcing the deal was scuppered, Psygnosis let 40 people go in the States, citing the move as a "re-org" within the company's US development department. Folks in the San Francisco office suddenly found themselves "redundant," because two projects, Control Freak and Reapers, were canceled as the company "refocused our catalog in development for FY '99/'00."

989 PROVIDES FIRST PEEK AT US VERSION OF BUST A MOVE

A few months ago, we did a glowing preview of Bust A Move, the awesome Japanese breakdancing game from Enix. Bust A Move was hotly sought after by several companies in the US, including SCEA and Capcom, but was ultimately announced during E3 to be part of 989 Studios initial Christmas lineup, as well as going through a title change to Bust A Groove (so as not to be confused with the Acclaim puzzle game). The game featured some of the best music to ever grace the PlayStation, as well as some interesting, ah, "cultural differences" that are causing some interesting challenges in bringing the game to Western shores. Well, after getting a chance to play with the game a bit during 989's Media Day in San Diego, we can report that while there have been some changes, the game will remain faithful to its Japanese version. The most obvious change was made to the music; all of the Japanese lyrics have been changed to English and have been re-recorded by either the original artists or incredible sound-alikes. The driving instrumental tracks remain unchanged, which is a huge relief. Our biggest fear was that 989 was going to attempt to license big name recording artists with nightmarish possibilities (imagine trying to pull freaky style moves to Mariah Carey or Puff Daddy). There have been a few other small changes to the game (Strike no longer smokes or drinks from his hip flask, for instance), but nothing major. We'll bring you a more in-depth look at this excellent game when it's ready.

SUPERMAN FLIES ONTO PLAYSTATION

French developer Titus has just decided to bring their Superman game to the PlayStation. Originally a Nintendo 64 exclusive, Titus has opted to bring the license to as wide a market as possible. Based on the cartoon on the WB network, Superman has the look and feel of the highly stylized series. While the graphics on the PSX version most likely won't be as sharp as the Nintendo, the game will remain essentially the same, letting players control the Big Blue Boyscout and all his cool powers (flying, super speed, heat vision and freezing breath). Titus has recently acquired software development house Blue Sky (of Vectorman fame), who will handle the transition.

KONAMI HAS BIG PLANS FOR END OF THE CENTURY

Beyond Metal Gear Solid (an almost guaranteed million seller in the US alone), Konami plans on being a major presence in the PlayStation world throughout '99. Other titles include a 3D fighting game called Kensei: Sacred Fist, a 3D adventure game called Dark Messiah, the Metal Gear Solid-meets-Resident Evil action/horror game Silent Hill (which we're particularly excited about), Trap Gunner, NBA Pro 99 and NHL Pro 99.

INFOGRAMES LAUNCHES VIDEO GAME TV STATION IN EUROPE

Infogrames and French satellite TV giant CANAL+ recently joined forces to bring lucky Euro-gamers their very own media outlet, Game One. This channel will be a specialist video game channel running 24 hours a day on satellite and digital broadcasting services in Europe. But, does anyone really want to watch other people playing video games? Infogrames CEO Bruno Bonnell opines, "A television channel backed by CANAL+ know-how which continuously broadcasts video game-related material represents an outstanding marketing and communication opportunity for any publisher operating in the video game market." Wow, way to think about the gamers supposedly dying to get this channel. With their conquest of the European market, can it be long before the two companies set their eyes on US cable? As long as it's not as painful as watching ZDTV, we remain hopeful.

PLAYSTATION 2: THE TRUTH

The truth is: there is no truth. Sony has made absolutely no announcements about their next hardware platform and have repeatedly maintained that the PlayStation has several more years of life left in it (despite other magazines insistence that the PlayStation has been "maxed out" — yeah, right). So, ignore the rumors and "inside information" you hear from web sites or "trade" magazines and stick to the straight dope from PS Extreme. As soon as real news appears, rest assured that we'll have it.

PS

EX NEWS

DEAD IN THE WATER™

LIVE FAST . . . DIE WET

"I WILL destroy you in the Battle mode ....
I WILL destroy you in the two player split screen mode...
I WILL destroy you in the combat cable link mode ....
I WILL DESTROY YOU MAGGOT !"
-SGT.Steel

"Look here Son, I WILL use your head as an anchor and your butt as a seat cushion"
-Officer J.B.Nightstick

"When the flag goes down baby your gonna feel the funk of my Disco Fever Ray . You'll be hearin' "Stayin' Alive" til' ya die"
-Ebony Justice

"I will continually upgrade my sinister hearse boat and weapons to extreme necropotent porportions and your weak pale flesh will ROT IN PIECES"
-Dr.Graves









- 13 'Off the Hook' characters to choose from.
- 9 Blazin' aquatic tracks to tear up.
- 3D rendered waves like you've never seen before.
- An arsenal of high powered, high tech customizable weapons and boats- all fully upgradeable.
- Two player split screen or combat cable link.

PLAYER 1

EVERYONE
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

PlayStation®

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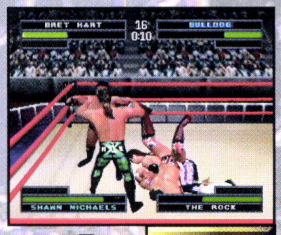
PlayStation Gaming News

Top 10

BEST SELLING PLAYSTATION TITLES RANKED ON UNIT SALES

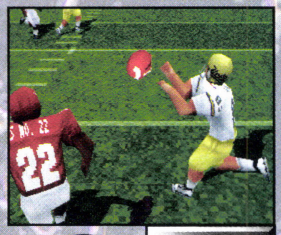
AUGUST 1998

Acclaim's
WWF WarZone



1
last month **1**
average retail price **$43**

EA's
NCAA Football 99



2
last month **
average retail price **$42**

Sony's
Gran Turismo



3
last month **2**
average retail price **$41**

EA's
Madden NFL 99



4
last month **
average retail price **$42**

989 Studios'
NFL Xtreme



5
last month **5**
average retail price **$41**

989 Studios'
NFL Gameday 99



6
last month **
average retail price **$41**

Namco's
Tekken 3



7
last month **6**
average retail price **$45**

Eidos'
Tomb Raider



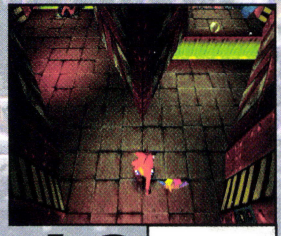
8
last month **8**
average retail price **$21**

Midway's
Mortal Kombat 4



9
last month **3**
average retail price **$44**

Sony's
Crash Bandicoot



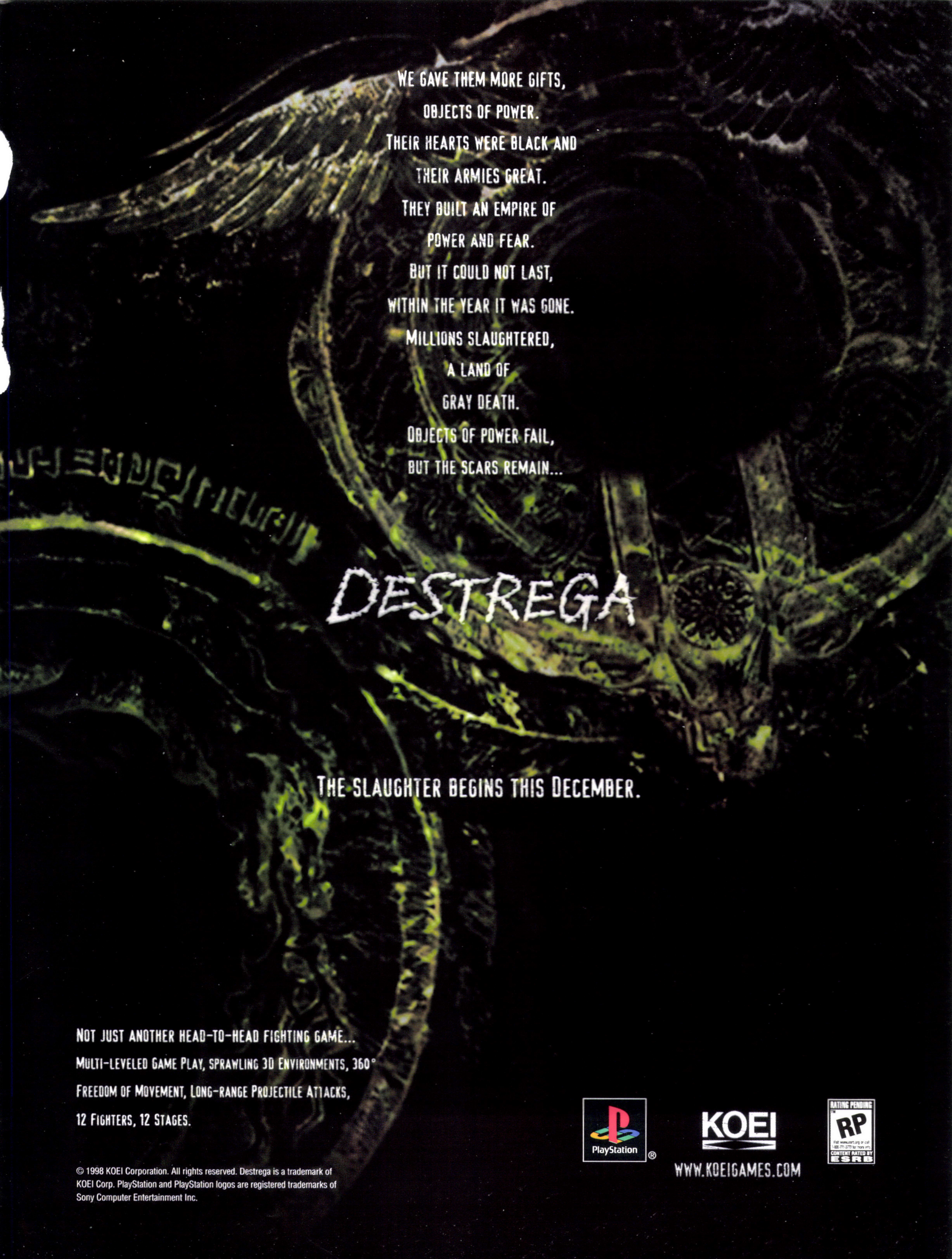
10
last month **9**
average retail price **$21**

Source: NPD TRSTS Video Games Tracking Service
900 West Shore Road, Port Washington, NY 11050
(516) 625-2294

** Not in Top 10 Last Month

The ratings reflected above are those of Dimension Publishing and do not represent the opinions of NPD TRSTS.

EX NEWS



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EXCESSORY

BY CHRIS KRAMER

DUAL FORCE ANALOG CONTROLLER – MAD CATZ – $29.95



And so, the inevitable parade of Dual Shock analog controllers begins to march into the offices. Amongst the first to bring the pain is Mad Catz, weighing in with their Dual Force Analog Controller. The Dual Force is a heavy controller, about the same size as Sony's Dual Shock, but pigged out by the unit's reliance on two AAA batteries. Batteries? I don't get it either. Evidently, Sony doesn't feel the need to share their technical know-how with non-licensed peripheral companies, so Mad Catz hasn't gleaned the magic secret of powering their force-feedback from the actual PlayStation. One of the neat things this controller does do, however, is emulate analog control, even for digital games. This means that all your pre-analog titles can be played with the sticks, if you desire. Some people feel that the small joysticks give you more precise control, even if they're not directly supported by the software. The pad also has a setting for "Steering Wheel Mode," in which the left stick handles the steering while the right stick is used for acceleration and braking. In this mode, L1 and R1 functions can be accessed by pushing down on the sticks. The Dual Force also lets you add turbo to any or every one of the various buttons.

SILVER X

On the whole, this is a decent pad, but not really a standout one. If you're in desperate need of a new controller and the Sony Dual Shock isn't in convenient supply, this one will do. The need for batteries is a bit of a bummer, but is made up for by the pad's analog emulation and turbo options.

ADVANCED JOYSTICK – MAD CATZ – $39.95



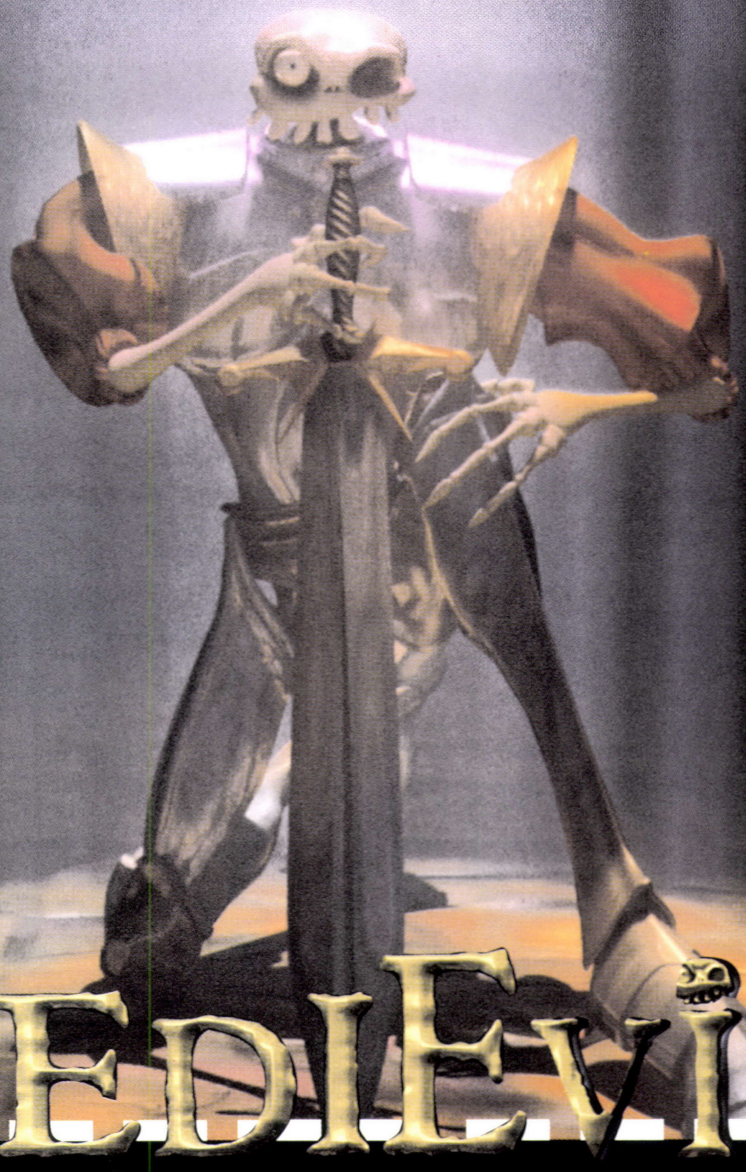
Last year, I was really into Colony Wars from Psygnosis, but cursed the basic PSX controller's lack of functionality for true flight games. This problem has plagued the few serious flying titles, as well as some of the more "sim" titles like MechWarrior 2, since the platform's inception. Anyone remember the ill-fated double-joystick analog controller from Sony? Didn't think so. That item was about as unwieldy a peripheral as you could have.

Here comes Mad Catz, with yet another controller with a wacky analog emulator. The advanced joystick has a "pulse digital" switch, which allows the joystick to act as an analog controller in games that support the function. When pulse digital is selected, the further you push the joystick, the faster your character on screen will move, just like an analog controller. Of course, the instruction manual carries a caveat that not all games may be compatible with this mode.

The joystick is solidly constructed. The four main PlayStation action buttons are positioned conveniently on the stick itself, and repeated again on the base for left-handed use. There's even a four-way hat switch on the top, for those few games that support its function. The stick is tall, manufactured for adult sized hands, unlike some of the other PSX controllers that were obviously made for wee people. The base is sculpted to accept your hand in a natural, ergonomic curve. The buttons on the base are oversized, making them easy to find in moments of gaming-induced panic.

SILVER X

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EXCESSORY

BY MARK ANDROVICH

SCORPION DUAL SHOCK CONTROLLER – NYKO – $29.95



Here's a controller with nearly everything on it-slow motion, turbo, digital or analog control, and force feedback. Fortunately, it's neither as heavy or unwieldy as the number of options might suggest. The force feedback feels about the same as with Sony's controller, but the analog sticks are slightly farther away from the sides. The directional thumb pad is represented by a circular dish with raised edges. While this design makes it easier to do diagonal button combinations associated with fighting games, it doesn't have quite as good a response in the compass directions. An innovative variation from the standard controller design is the trigger-shaped L2 and R2 buttons. Unfortunately, for people like me who prefer to use their two index fingers to reach all four shoulder buttons, this becomes more difficult. The controller is designed so that your index fingers rest on L1 and R1 and your middle fingers rest on L2 and R2, but this leaves you with just four fingers left to hold up the fairly large controller. If you are playing a game that allows you to reassign the button functions, the controller feels quite natural using your index fingers on L2 and R2 (leaving L1 and R1 unused). Overall, the Scorpion is a decent controller with a lot of features, but if you play games which regularly utilize the L2 and R2 buttons, it takes some getting used to.



SUPER COBRA LIGHT GUN – NYKO – $44.95



Once again, Nyko has come out with a controller that has just about everything. There are four buttons-two on each side near the trigger-- for activating special weapons, reloading, starting and pausing. There is also a shock feature that can be turned on and off. The Super Cobra features normal, auto-fire, auto-reload or combination auto-fire and auto-reload modes and you can set both the reload and fire speeds. Most importantly, the light gun can be used with either Konami or Namco games. If that is not enough for you, it has a dual-end connector to allow it to be used with both a PlayStation and a Sega Saturn. The Super Cobra's optical sensor is located on the top of the gun and is easy to aim. It has a solid feel to it-slightly heavier than the Namco GunCon, which was too light in my opinion-- and it comes in a pleasing shade of blue. It even has flashing red LED's on the side! Now, you may wonder why you should pay nearly as much for a Super Cobra as you would to purchase a GunCon which comes packaged with a game. I can think of a couple of reasons. First, Nyko's gun has several features which the GunCon lacks and, unlike Namco's gun which only works with its own two games, the Super Cobra will work with all other games such as Die Hard Trilogy, Area 51, Maximum Force and Elemental Gearbolt to name a few. Second, if you are looking for a second light gun to play Time Crisis or Point Blank and you don't want to pay extra for a game you don't want, this is one way to do it. If you're in the market for an all-purpose light gun loaded with features, you definitely can't go wrong with this one.



PSYCHO PeNGUINS

cRushers and wOrmholes

(All the reasons you love to ride)

There are burly, uncharted riding environments out there and the only way you can get there is jump on a hoverdek and follow **Mia** and **Xako**.

Are you ready for **50 levels, five zones** (including desert, jungle and an underworld), psycho-penguins, crushers, bosses, wormholes and teleports?

If you're good, you can learn new tricks to access secret areas. If you're really good, someone might even pay homage to your skills with a righteous tattoo.

PSYGNOSIS

Vans

PlayStation

EVERYONE E CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

Psybadek

www.psygnosis.com



00.01 00.02 00.03 00.04 00.05

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SEND US YOUR CODES AND WIN BIG PRIZES!

Each month we'll pick the best code sent in by our loyal and intelligent readers and send that person a brand spankin' new copy of ASCII's hot new point and click adventure game for the PlayStation, Clock Tower or, if fighting's your thing, ASCII's SpecializedStick (you decide). But wait! That's not all: if you act now, we'll also include ASCII's super stylish ASCII Grip one-handed controller for the PlayStation, for your controlling pleasure, PLUS twelve (12) free issues of the best, the first, monthly dedicated PlayStation magazine, PS*Extreme*, of course! Whoa! That's a lot of cool stuff for just a code; what are you waiting for?

WE HAVE A WINNER!

Congratulations and thanks go to this month's winners, Kevin Mitchum and David Kirkham of Oklahoma City, OK. Kevin and David teamed up to bring you these awesome codes for NFL Blitz. You know they must be psycho gamers because they sent us these codes 3 days after the game came out. Whoa! That's dedication to excellence, friends. If you want the goods, you gotta be fast, 'cause you know Kevin and David are gonna beat you to the draw if you even blink.

NFL Blitz



Actual codes listed in the section. Not enough space here.

CONTEST RULES: Anyone of any age can enter. The only people not eligible to win are employees of Dimension Publishing or ASCII Entertainment, their friends, family, pets and anyone they talk to or know of. Dimension Publishing reserves the right to make any and all decisions regarding the contest. One winner per month will be chosen, at Dimension Publishing's discretion, based on the code or trick supplied by the entrant. If you win but do not specify, in your code submission, which prize you want to receive (Felony 11-79 or an ASCII SpecializedStick), then we will choose for you.

NFL Blitz

These tricks are to be done during "Today's Match-up" screen, using the turbo, jump, and pass buttons for the first, second, and third buttons, and the D-Pad in the direction required. Symbols are displayed each time the button is pressed. Press the appropriate button the number of times indicated. "123 down" means press: turbo once, jump twice, pass three times, then down on the D-Pad.

CPU assistance disabled
012 down
Show FG%
001 down
Disable codes and CPU assistance
111 down
Random Plays
115 left
More skilled CPU
314 down
Night
222 right
NO stadium
500 left
Later late hits
010 up
Show entire field
021 right
No receiver names
102 right
Step instead of jump out of bounds
211 left
No 1st down
210 up
Disable punts
151 up (CPU can still punt in 1 plyr mode)
No RANDOM fumbles
423 down
Rainy weather
555 right
Clear weather
212 left
Snowy weather
525 down
Big head
200 right
Huge head
040 Up
Big head team
203 right
Headless player
321 left
Headless team
123 right
Invisible
433 up
Giant teams
141 right
Tiny teams
310 right
Big ball
050 right
Super FG
123 left
Bullet passes
250 left
Faster blitzes
045 up
Powerful offense
312 left
Hyper blitz
555 up
Faster players
404 left
Sronger defense
421 up
Unlimited turbo
514 up
Faster turbo
032 left
Stronger offense
321 up
Stronger team
233 up
unlimited throw
223 right
super passing
423 right
fast pass
250 left
power blockers
312 left
power speed
404 left
power defense
421 up
power offense
321 up
unidentified ball carrier
522 down
invisible receiver
333 left
super blitz
444 up
LT

Code submitted by Kevin Mitchum and David Kirkham

Madden NFL 99



Go to the "Code Entry" screen at the "Main Menu" screen and enter the following codes. Please note that you can only enter 15 at any given time.

HIDDEN TEAMS

1) NFC Pro Bowl Team .....BESTNFC
2) AFC Pro Bowl Team .....AFCBEST
3) All-Madden .....BOOM
4) All-Time Greats .....TURKEYLEG
5) 75TH Anniversary Team .....THROWBACK
6) '99 Cleveland Browns .....WELCOMEBACK
7) EA Sports Team .....INTHEGAME
8) Tiburon Team .....HAMMERHEAD
9) All-Time Stat Leaders .....IMTHEMAN
10) NFL Equipment Team .....GEARGUYS
11) 60's Team .....PEACELOVE
12) 70's Team .....BELLBOTTOMS
13) 80's Team .....??????????
14) 90's Team .....HEREANDNOW

EX ECUTE



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GAME SHARK Codez

Welcome to the Game Shark section. Each month we'll list the newest and coolest codez right here for your cheat'n pleasure. Warning: These codes won't work without a Game Shark. For the latest codez and info, get on the internet and check www.gameshark.com, www.cmgsccc.com or www.datel.co.uk. If you find a code doesn't work, you may need to upgrade your Game Shark. Check your instruction manual for details. (Most of these codes are "unofficial" and may or may not work correctly at all. Use at your own risk.)

```
NFL Blitz (GameShark version 2.0)
Home Team Always Gains xtra Point ...30150745 0001
Home Team Never Gains xtra Point ... 30150745 0000
Away Team Always Gains xtra Point .. 30150744 0001
Away Team Never Gains xtra Point ... 30150744 0000
10 Points Gained per TD ............ 800435E0 000A
0 Points Gained per TD ............. 800435E0 0000
Home Team Score Modifier Codes
1st Quarter ........................ 80171F24 00??
2nd Quarter ........................ 80171F28 00??
3rd Quarter ........................ 80171F2C 00??
4th Quarter ........................ 80171F30 00??
Away Team Score Modifier Codes
1st Quarter ........................ 80171F40 00??
2nd Quarter ........................ 80171F44 00??
3rd Quarter ........................ 80171F48 00??
4th Quarter ........................ 80171F4C 00??
Home Team Infinite Turbo ........... 8017204A 0064
Home Team No Turbo ................. 8017204A 0000
Away Team Infinite Turbo ........... 8017206A 0064
Away Team No Turbo ................. 8017206A 0000
Uniform Swap Home Team ............. 80171F5C 0001
Uniform Swap Away Team ............. 80171F5C 0000
P1 Character Modifier .............. 80172028 00??
 ..................................80172028 0000
P2 Character Modifier .............. 8017202C 00??
 ..................................80172028 0000
P1 Big Head Mode (Team) ............ 80099B94 0001
P2 Big Head Mode (Team) ............ 80099B94 0002
Both Players Big Head Mode (Team) .. 80099B94 0003
P1 Big Head Mode (Selected) ........ 80099C14 0001
P2 Big Head Mode (Selected) ........ 80099C14 0002
Both Players Big Head (Selected) ... 80099C14 0003
P1 Late Hits ....................... 80099C18 0001
P2 Late Hits ....................... 80099C18 0002
Both Players Late Hits ............. 80099C18 0003
P1 No Play Selection ............... 80099C2C 0001
P2 No Play Selection ............... 80099C2C 0002
Both Players No Play Selection ..... 80099C2C 0003
Night Time Game .................... 80099C28 0001
Rainy Game ......................... 80099BA8 0001
Blitz Code Selection Time [Note] ... D019FA0C FF7E
 ..................................80099640 0120
 ..................................D019FA0C FF7D
 ..................................80099640 0068
P1 Invisible ....................... 80099C20 0001
P2 Invisible ....................... 80099C20 0002
Both Players Invisible ............. 80099C20 0003
P1 Infinite Turbo (In-Game Cheat) .. 80099C04 0001
P2 Infinite Turbo (In-Game Cheat) .. 80099C04 0002
Both Players Inf Turbo (In-Game) ... 80099C04 0003
Tournament Mode .................... 80099BD4 0001
P1 Tiny Team ....................... 80099B9C 0001
P2 Tiny Team ....................... 80099B9C 0002
Both Players Tiny Team ............. 80099B9C 0003

Quantity Digits to Accompany Character Modifier
00 - Mark Turmell     01 - Daniel
02 - Van              03 - Jason
04 - Japple           05 - Jenifr
06 - Gentil           07 - Luis
08 - Raiden           09 - Root
0A - Shinok           0B - Skull
0C - Thug             0D - Sal
0E - Forden           0F - Carltn
10 - Mike             11-1D ???
1E - Grinch           1F - ???
20 - LT               21-26 ???
27 - Guido

Note: Press UP+SELECT to Stop Time input the
Blitz codes you want to use then Press
DOWN+SELECT to give it Normal Time!
```

WE KYPE OUR SHARK KODEZ FROM WWW.CMGSCCC.COM

STADIUMS
1) EA Sports .....EASTADIUM
2) Tiburon.....OURHOUSE
3) Cleveland.....DOGPOUND99
4) RFK.....THEHOGS
5) Original Miami .....NOTAFISH
6) Original Oakland.....STICKEM
7) Original Tampa.....SOMBRERO
8) Astrodome.....FOR_RENT

Code submitted by Emmanuel Vazquez

Batman & Robin



INVINCIBILITY: To prevent yourself from losing health, press L1, R2, R1, L2, Select, ⊗, ○ at the title screen.

Code submitted by Matt Kutza

NFL Gameday 99



EASTER EGGS:
Enter these codes in the easter egg menu
Even Teams - Makes all players equal
Big Balls - Makes the football very large
Weak Players - fatique quickly
Blinders Referee - doesnít call penalties
Big Hits - Louder football noises
Stickem - Great hands for receivers
Pole axe - Forearm shiver is juiced
Piston - Super stiff arm
Flea circus - Players are tiny and quick
Bunyon - players are jumbo sized
Hangtime - Punts hang in the air longer
Slideshow - See all the players after a game
GD Challenge - Hidden difficulty level
Swimmers - Swim moves juiced
Invisible - Players are invisible

Code submitted by Matt Kutza

NFL Xtreme



CODES:
Enter these names at the player name screen:
LAMEBOY LENNY - Reversed animation
BIG BEN - Huge players
BIGHEAD BOBBY - Big heads
SHRIMPY SEAN - Small arms
COINHEAD COREY - 2-D heads
MONKEY MICKEY - Long arms
GEORGE GIRAFFE - Long necks
TINY TOM - Small players

Code submitted by Matt Kutza

Parasite Eve



UNLIMITED BULLETS AND MEDICINE:
First, go to the police department. Then go down the stairs and to the bottom left door(weapons room). Open the box on the counter to recieve 6 bullets. Then go to the chest in the upper right hand side of the room to get a medicine. Now, if you leave the room and come back, the box and chest will still be empty. Now you have to leave the N.Y.P.D. building and get to the map. Once you are there, go back inside the N.Y.P.D. building and go back to the weapons room. The box and chest will be closed and will contain 6 bullets and mediceine just like before. Repeat this as many times as you want, it will always be back.

Code submitted by Lorance Kim

Send all code submissions to:

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or email us at: **d3@quake.net**

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DRAGONSEEDS

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PlayStation®

if you

don't find this PEARL

and save an ENTIRE city.

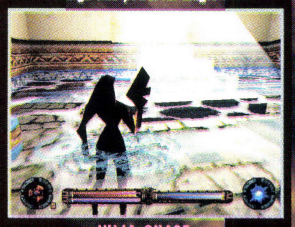
things are gonna get UGLY.



Lt. IKE HAWKINS:
A military-trained weapons expert



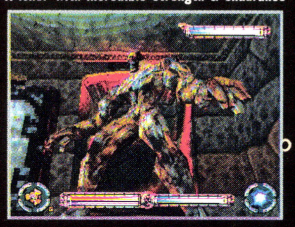
SOLAAR:
A strange and powerful magic healer



JULIA CHASE:
A cunning, fast and lethal fighter



MAXX HAVOC:
A loner with incredible strength & endurance



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THE FIELD: BLASTCAMP USA, CHICAGO. America's most unique paintball field! An ex-military Nike Missile Site with Barracks, Radar Towers, Ammo Dump, Target Range, Bunkers, Fortifications, Foxholes, Trenches...and much more!

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PC CD ROM

PlayStation

PSYGNOSIS

TEEN T AGES 13+ CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

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O.D.T

OR DIE TRYING

The citizens of Calli are about to be wiped out by a deadly epidemic. But to find the mystical green pearl that can save them, you must run a suicidal gauntlet through a massive tower. There are only two ways out: Alive and very dead. And there are plenty of hideous creatures in your way who are voting for dead. One thing's for sure, survival isn't pretty.

- Plunge into the bizarre 3-D worlds of O.D.T. It's part magic, part mayhem.
- Make your way through 8 intricate levels and more than 70 treacherous sectors.
- O.D.T. is an intense action adventure game that lets you choose from four characters – Lt. Ike Hawkins, Julia Chase, Maxx Havoc and Solaar – with different strengths, abilities and special moves.
- Confront your own mortality with endless fighting combinations, including hand-to-hand, weapon or spell combat.

TWISTED METAL II













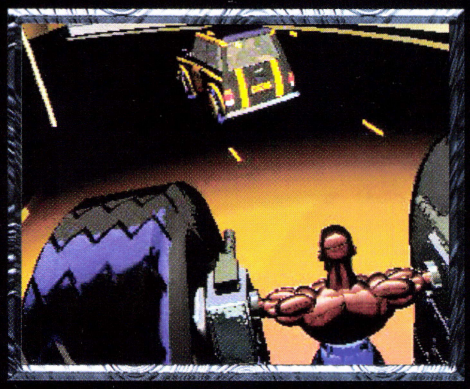














I remember when the PlayStation came out, way back in '95, one of the games that I was most excited about was Twisted Metal. The first TM was an excellent indication of direction that the PlayStation was headed. Combining top-notch looks with awesome gameplay, a great two-player mode and the sort of wacky sense of humor that has made the system so popular with gamers in their mid-twenties.

Despite being remarkably short, Twisted Metal quickly became one of the front-line PlayStation franchises, selling somewhere in the neighborhood of a gazillion copies, between its original release and its new-found life in Sony's $20 Greatest Hits line. The following year, SCEA unleashed TM2, which brought in a whole new set of cars and drivers, had much larger 3D environments and introduced "special moves."

For awhile, it looked as though there wouldn't be a Twisted Metal 3. The developers, Single Trac, had gone their own way and Sony's internal producer decided that he was tired of the series and not interested in doing another. Fortunately, 989 has rallied to the cause, deciding that the game must live on. Enter Twisted Metal 3.

The best way to describe TM3 is "more of everything." More areas, more cars, more combos, more... stuff. 989 has gone out of their way to preserve the original twisted spirit, while adding to and updating the game.

Twisted Metal 3 has even larger environments than the last, with a much more realistic 3D feel to them. In keeping with twisted tradition, the arenas and areas correspond to famous sites around the globe: LA, London, DC, Chicago, the North Pole (Twisted Metal versus the reindeer?), Area 51, Egypt and a host of secret tracks.

Patrolling and annihilating these cities are 12 vehicles and a mixture of drivers, both old and new. Gangsta-style Thumper, wheelie-boy Axel, motorcycle madman Mr. Grimm, the ghost-like Specter,

EXCLUSIVE









Hammerhead, Roadkill, Outlaw and Warthog join newcomers Club Kid, Flower Power, Auger and Firestarter. 989 is also promising a few hidden cars and bosses, including the demonic clown, Sweet Tooth.



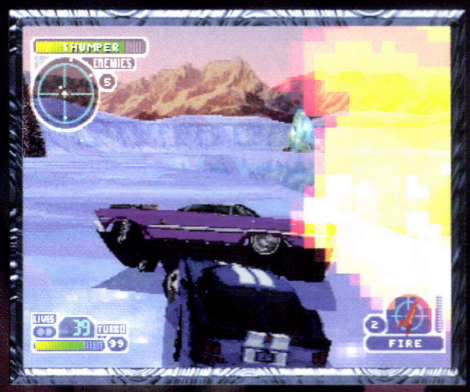
Back again are the controversial "Special Moves." In Twisted Metal 2, the designers decided to implement a series of special moves, like a fighting game. To activate the moves, players had to perform a motion on the control, as in Tekken or Street Fighter. It proved much more difficult to do a special move while driving, however, than in a fighting game, which has been recognized in TM3. While there still are special moves, they are now much easier to perform. Special moves in TM3 include the Freeze Blast, High Jump, Rear Attack and a host of others.





The core technology running the Twisted Metal engine has also been given a big revamp, which helps to give the feeling of really being behind the wheel with guns blazing. Twisted Metal 3 runs at a constant 30 frames per second, with colored lighting effects and Gourad shading. 989 has created a new "Tru-Physics" engine, which creates realistic skids, collisions, powerslides and shocks. The polygonal vehicles also reflect damage, becoming more battered and crunched as they take a pounding. There's also a greater focus on the multiplayer aspects of the game. Surprisingly, while the traditional two player mode has always been a part of the series, 989 is now including options for the near-mythical link cable, with the ability to connect up to four players (that's a lot of TVs).

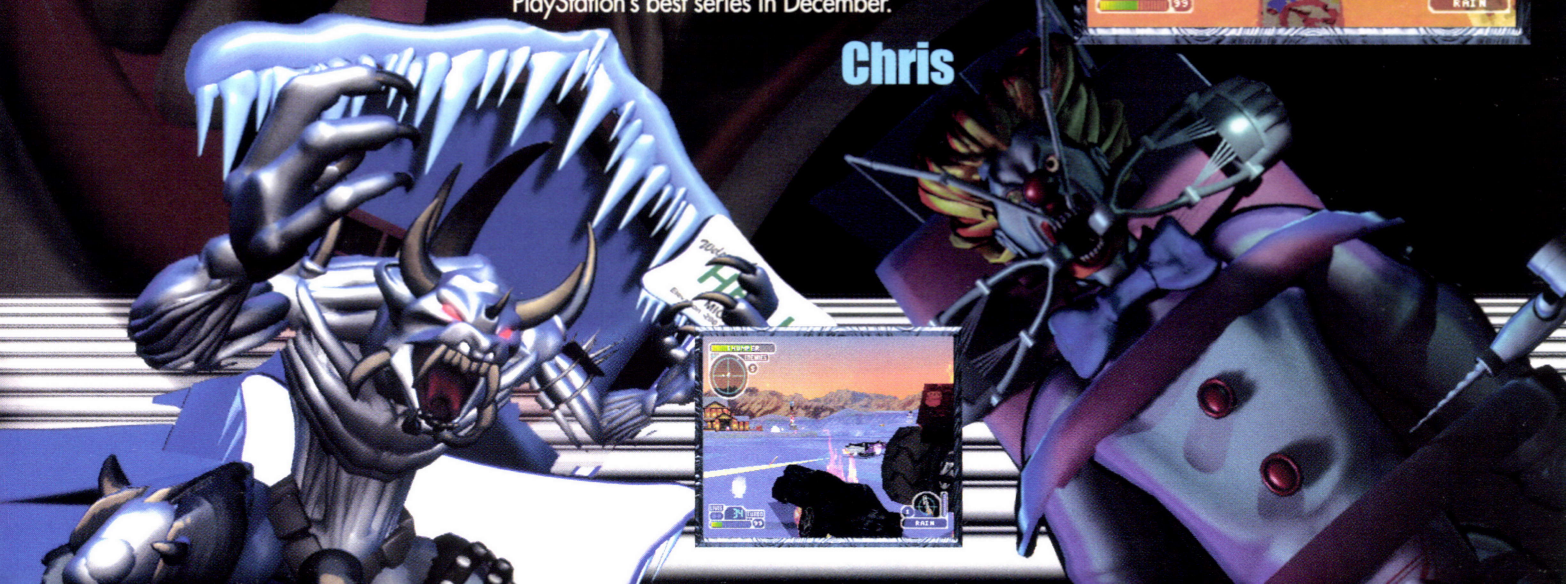




Watch for the next installment of one of the PlayStation's best series in December.



Chris



AKUJI

THE HEARTLESS



Crystal Dynamics is getting some serious mileage out of the GEX Enter the Gecko engine. With each successive game in development (Legacy of Kain, GEX 3, and Akuji all use it), the core technology evolves and advances in leaps and bounds. Akuji the Heartless will be the second game released with this engine, and shows off a bevy of graphical and gameplay features that weren't in GEX 2.

Playing more like Tomb Raider meets Turok than a cutesy action/platformer, Akuji the Heartless is a fast-paced, 3D combative, action/epic set in a world fueled by the elemental power of voodoo (no, not our sister publication, Voodoo magazine — we're talkin' the black magic type). The storyline is fraught with betrayal, intrigue and battle, sounding more like a Cajun version of Othello than a video game. Set in a mythical land called Mamora, the people of the time had the same passions as their Gods. As long as people could remember, there had always been war sweeping across the lands. Powerful families were incessantly vying for control of Mamora and its neighboring countrysides. Many died, alliances were built and broken, and the conflicts were endless... until Murat the voodoo priest warrior came into power. Murat of the Selvia brokered a small tribe into a vast empire. Through a series of strategic marriages, he was able to cement his power and attempt to bring peace to the land. With the marriage of his second son, Akuji, to the beautiful Kesho, the eldest daughter of the Grimaldi tribe, Mamora would finally know that peace. Unfortunately, Akuji's brother, Orad, a powerful voodoo priest, had other plans for Mamora, and brutally murdered Akuji on his wedding day in an attempt to disrupt the "unnatural" peace. Orad's minions killed Akuji by ripping out his heart from his chest cavity, condemning him to Hell in the process. In order to escape and save his bride from the clutches of his treacherous brother, Akuji has to locate the spirits of his ancestors and use their power to break the barriers between Hades and Mamora — that's no small feat!





With such an intriguing storyline, the game had better have the muscle to back it up, and Akuji is set to deliver. The GEX engine has been overhauled and re-worked from the bottom up in order to handle some of the more complex features the developers are striving for. Some of the key features you'll find in the game include beautifully detailed organ-

EXCLUSIVE

ic environments, a new process of de-coupling the draw times (which guarantee no slow down or drops in frame rate), an artificial intelligence engine for the enemies — which allow them to react to the player's actions, vertex lighting and morphing — creating dark and moody atmospheres with the ability to undulate surfaces, a host of character animations such as rolling, crawling, climbing, swinging, sliding and hand-over-hand mechanics, an extensive magic system featuring 11 voodoo spells, a sniper mode that lets you use your magic spells to pick enemies off at long ranges, a unique fighting system which allows for hand-to-hand combat with combination moves and multiple attacks, and the ability to morph into a stealthy panther. Believe it or not, there are plenty more features in addition to these, but we'll get to them next time.

Currently, Crystal is working feverishly to complete Akuji and have it ready to ship in time for the holiday season. From the few versions that have crossed our desks in the last few months, it's easy to see that they are definitely on the right track. We'll keep you posted on the progress of the game as we approach the month of November, but we can already tell that it could turn out to be something special.

GREG!



DESTREGA









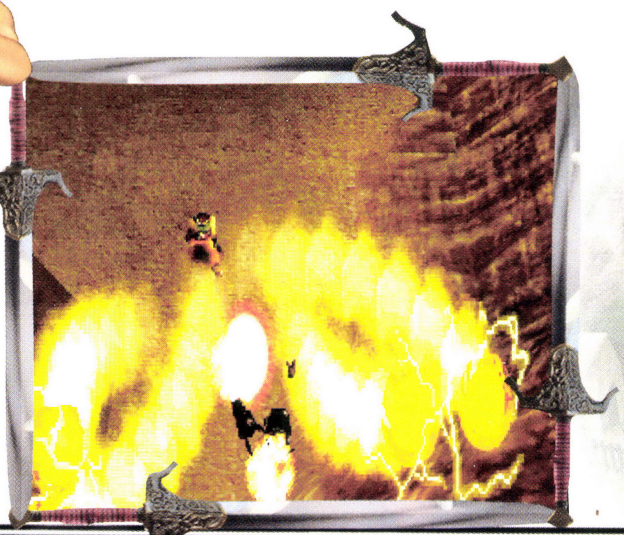


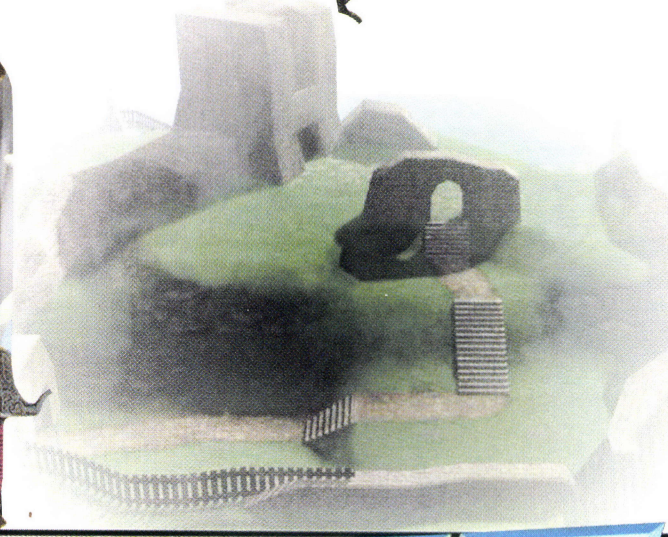


Koei has traditionally been a company that, up until recently, was synonymous with strategy and simulation games revolving around historical chinese warlords. The formula has obviously worked well for them, with some of their older 16-bit titles, such as the Romance of the Three Kingdoms series, still selling out at retail every time they ship in a new batch. With last year's Dynasty Warriors, a weapon-based, 3D, one-on-one fighting game featuring (what else), historical chinese warlords, they took a definite departure from their typical strategic war simulation and delved into the realm of polygons, combos and counters. While that title did well for them and received critical acceptance (it rated 85% in our August '97 issue — volume 2, issue 9), it was still a somewhat typical 3D fighting game — not offering anything exactly new or revolutionary in terms of gameplay. Well, the game's developer, Omega Force, have returned this year with Destrega, a new fighting game that is entirely unique and unlike any PlayStation fighting game on the market today.

While still honoring the traditional fighting mechanics, such as punching, kicking, jumping, combos, counters, special moves, etc... Destrega cranks it up a notch by allowing fighters to move freely within its massive 3D environments, thus adding the new element of long-range fighting. The usual physical attacks are now accompanied by a multitude of sensational, long-range, magic projectile attacks which contribute to a very fast-paced action/fighting experience. In addition, players can use the environments to their advantage, by moving to higher ground for a better vantage point or hiding behind objects (such as walls or build-







ELUSIVE

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VACATIONING IN HELL

We road tested 14 KILLER KARS on the twisted streets of NukeTown

BURNT RUBBER, TOASTED FLESH

Aromatherapy on the Road

Tips for Snagging Tourists-- And How to Avoid Premature Ejectulation Once You've Got 'Em

A³ BABE OF THE MONTH INSIDE

Special FREE Issue for Automercenaries

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Dick Biggs, Editor

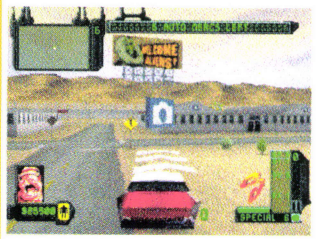
Welcome back, Automercenaries!

Remember, on your shoulders ride the hopes of all those too poor to afford a real vacation. Next time you pick up a vacationer, look him in the eyes as you grab his hard-earned wad of cash and you'll see the gratitude, the hope and the sheer stupidity of one desperate enough to risk his life for a **photo-opportunity.**

Treasure that moment. It's what being a thrill-killing, road-rioting madman is all about.

Keep on truckin'

Mr. Biggs



GREETINGS FROM AREA 51

HELL on Wheels

You're gunning it down Main Street. Shrapnel glancing off your windshield. Geiger-counter going off the scale. And a snap-happy Japanese couple in the back of the cab. The question is what should you be driving for maximum survivability and tourist satisfaction? Sit back, we did the work for you when **we road-tested 14 state-of-the-art tricked-out deathmobiles one glowing summer afternoon among the napalm trees of Nuke Town.**

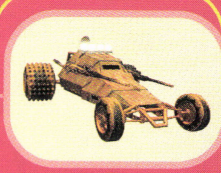
For raw hearse-power, nothing beats the ***Sidewinder.*** Five tons of tank with more firepower than the Third World War. Too big? Well, try on the ***Bitch-In Wheels*** and put the muscle back where it belongs – behind the muzzle of a machine gun.

For pure Auto-mercenary sex appeal, there's only one choice – the ***Meat Wagon.*** This fuel-injected weeniemobile says more about you than a pair of socks stuffed down your trousers ever can.

For those of you who like a little mercy with your massacre, nothing can touch ***Ozone,*** a well-armed ambulance that hurts while it heals.

You want high-octane performance? Car Combat Ultra? Look no further than the pulse-pounding ***Pyro*** – a flame-spewing semi filled with fuel. You never run out of gas and if you do go down, you can take everyone with you

.....continued on page 72











Sister Mary Lascivious
Thought for the Day

-Thou Shalt Drive Like A Righteous Mad Bastard.
† *So Sayeth the Lord.*



When Was the Last Time a Tourist Hit Your Window at 92 mph?



Hey, it happens. You have a bad day. Someone sends a missile your way and bang — *Premature Ejectulation* — out flies your tourist and before you know it everyone's got little bits of Hawaian shirt and entrails all over the windshield. No problem. Whip out a 40 ounce bottle of ever-loving **SPLATTER-X** Windshield Cleaner and, hey presto...the future's so bright you gotta wear shades.

THE BLAST WORD

Every self-respecting Automercenary knows there are few things in life more enjoyable than vaporizing, burning, bombing and totalling stuff. Here's our hot picks for the tastiest targets the post-apocalyptic world has to offer.:

AIR FORCE ONE - It's a helicopter. It's the President. It's dust.
GOLF COURSES - One driver and 18 holes of fury!
BLIMPS - Zap the zeppelin!



White House? — White Trash!



KILL THE CADDY!!!

AUTOMERCS ON-LINE

On the road? Get on-line for **weekly cheat codes,** the latest updates, screen shots, hints and tips (better than a road map) and killer kontests. Go to **www.roguetrip.com** for the lowdown on all the low life.

FENDER BLENDER

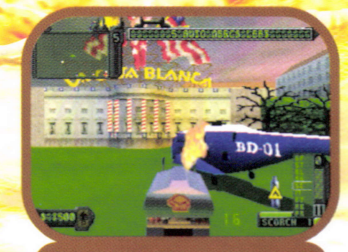
What the well-armed are packing these days (and how to get more bang for your weapons buck.)



Meteor Balls
They bounce. They burn. 'Nuff said.
$800 each



Sticky Weapons
Clamp one on your enemy and sit back while he tries to palm it off on someone else, or go down trying.
10 for $850

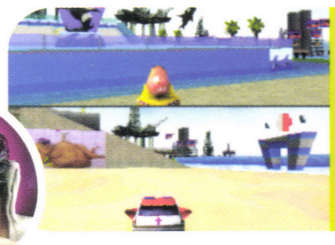


Pyro Weapons
Hose your foes with gasoline - then sit back and ignite for the kill.
$5000 each



Stingers
Killer bees got nothing on these babies, so go ahead, kill with confidence.
$7750 per round

AUTOMERCENARY HALL OF SHAME



ELVIS D. KANG
"Don't be cruel. Your automercenary is true. Thank you. Thank you very much."



AGENT ORANGE
"A vacation should be just like war. Only with better photographs."



NECROBOT
"🚗🚙🚌✈✈✈🚚🚛🚜🚒🚤🚂🚃🚄🚅🚆🚇🚈🚉🚊🚝🚞🚋🚌🚍🚎🚐🚑🚒🚓🚔🚕🚖🚗🚘🚙🚚🚛🚜🏎🏍🚲!!!"



BITCHIN' BUNNY
"There's so much fun waiting for you in my back seat...!"



FOUR PLAY

Don't drive alone, Rogue Trippers. Go multiplayer, because Automercenaries that slay together, stay together!



THE BEST RIDE OF ALL

Check out Li'l Gator Bait.

Some of you automercenaries probably seen her tooling around in her propeller-driven swamp-hopper.

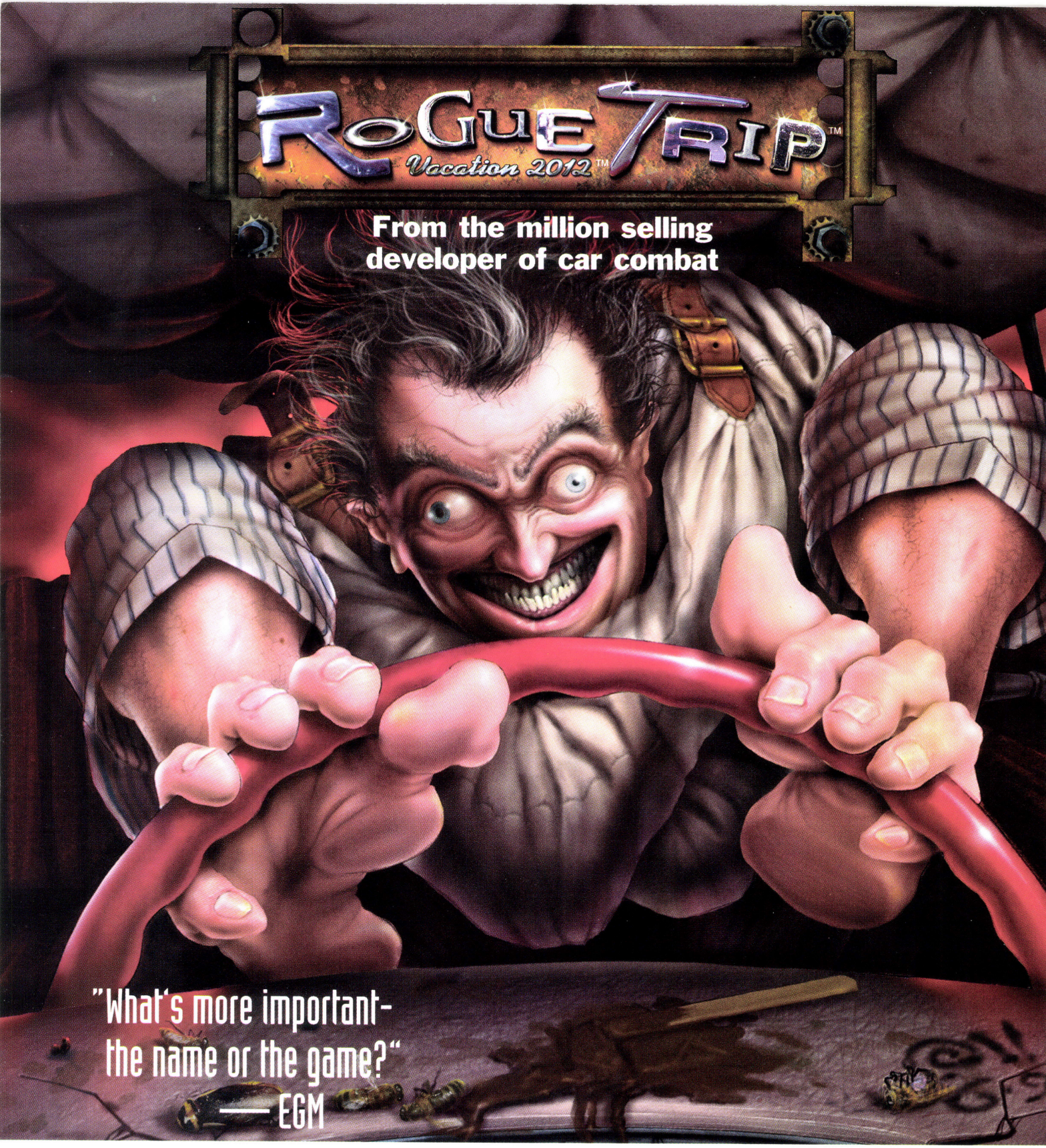
Well, looky here – the A³ Babe of the Month shows you all her dangerous curves on page 96.

Lube up and drive on!



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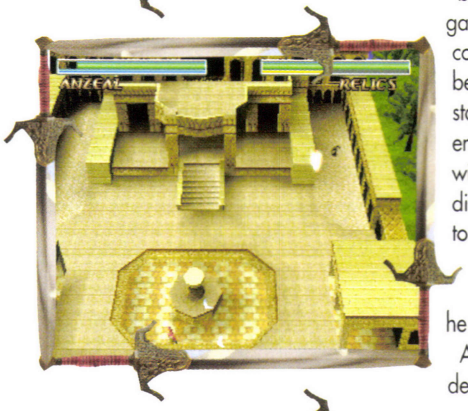
ings) in order to charge up their magic or plan for the next attack.

Attack commands are executed using the square, triangle and circle buttons. Each button has been assigned a property (speed, power and span) and, by pressing one of the buttons when you are out of punching range, will cast a magic spell based on those properties. By pressing the same button repeatedly, or by pressing a combination of the buttons, players can cast different types of magic. For example, if the square button is pressed repeatedly, the magic will travel extremely fast, and likewise, if the circle button is pressed repeatedly, the magic will fan out to cover a wide area. This is a bit of a departure from the now normal practice of using D-pad and button combinations (you know, half-circle = fireball, forward, down, forward for uppercut, etc.) and allows new players who might not be familiar with action fighting games to be able to execute visually dramatic magic blows, while keeping expert fighters well-challenged and entertained.





In addition to the prerequisite fighting modes found in most of today's popular fighters, Destrega also offers an in-depth and detailed story mode which evolves and unfolds via an hour's worth of real-time, voiced-over cut-scenes (similar to that of Metal Gear Solid). The story begins over 1,000 years ago when a group of wise sages who called themselves the "Strega" appeared and came to rest in a small country at the edge of the world. These kind sages taught the locals new ways to prosper and bestowed upon them mystical objects called "relics" which gave the people magical powers equal to the Strega. Of course, imperfect human nature took over and the people became greedy and selfish, using their newfound powers to start a war and take over neighboring lands. Eventually, the war ended and their precious powers were mysteriously drained along with it. The once-beautiful world was now a wasteland filled with death, disease and famine. As the thousand years passed, the people went back to their peaceful ways and rebuilt their lives. There is still one man, however, who has found and unleashed the power of the relics and strives to rebuild an army of relic-wielding fighters. Having gained control of much of his country, he now seeks to slay the ancestors of the sages and seal their power for all eternity. After nearly 1000 years, the continent once again finds itself on the brink of destruction...





With a cast of 12 unique fighters, five different battle modes, as well as the unfolding story mode, 12 different interactive arena environments, a host of graphical touches and special effects, 360 degree freedom of movement, and little extras such as Dual Shock support, Koei has another potential hit to add to their growing roster of uniquely different entertainment PlayStation titles. Destrega is currently undergoing localization and is scheduled for release sometime in November.

GREG

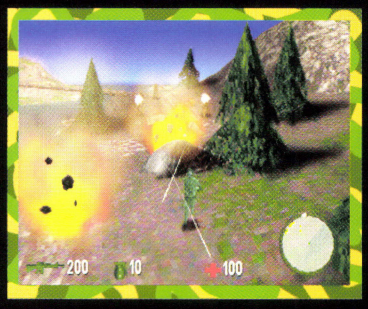


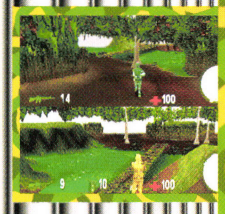




ARMY MEN 3D



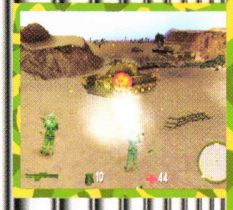


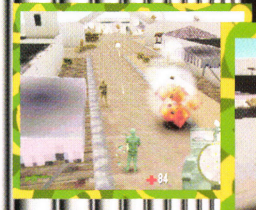
















Not so long ago, I was one of those punk kids who would steal my sister's Barbie dolls and find every means possible to destroy them. One of the more enjoyable practices was setting up my little green army men to ambush her. Once Barbie took out the GI Joe command post with a quick tail swipe from her suped-up Corvette, it was up to the hundreds of plastic army men to descend upon her and overwhelm her with their sheer numbers and plastic arsenal. This would last a while until God (me) would decide to destroy her tormentors and send them up in a blaze of glory (if you know what I mean).

Thanks to 3DO, I will now be able to relive my plastic army men days through my PlayStation. The team at 3DO has been hard at work on Army Men 3D in an effort to bring back childhood memories for everyone. It looks like they have spent a whole lot of time and energy to recreate the plastic guys that we grew up with.

Army Men promises to be a straight up action title where players take control of Sarge – the finest plastic green army man alive! He is called upon by green headquarters to put a stop to the tan army. It seems that the tan troops now control some kind of new super-weapon that reflects the sun and can melt a comrade from a great distance. Sarge sets out on his mission to find and destroy tan's newest destructive force. Along the way, he has to rescue fellow troops, stop tan raids, and open up can's of wup ass on all the enemies he encounters.

3DO has included all 6 classic army men; generic rifle dude, bazooka toting strong guy, mortar man, flamethrowin' psycho, grenade soldier, and the token minesweeper (I don't think these are the official names, but I kind of like 'em). Additionally, Sarge is able to assume each of the time-honored army men poses: walking, running, kneeling, crawling, ducking, and rolling. And what's an army without the vehicles? Sarge can jump into and, drive around in a Halftrack, Jeep, Cargo Truck, or Tank along the way.

Army Men 3D's control is simple, with an easy to use interface that will keep the game moving along at a rapid pace. The camera perspective is Tomb Raider style and all the graphics are hi-res, which will provide some pretty nice looking environments. To keep things interesting, a variety of different death animations (if you can call a plastic soldier melting or getting blown to bits "dying") will be included – flamethrowers will result in melted pools of plastic, rifle shots generate plastic shards flying everywhere and the grenades, well, they'll just make a big plastic mess.

The split-screen, 2 player mode will allow players to work cooperatively or duke it out in a deathmatch. There are around 17 unique missions taking place in 3 different areas – alpine (snow), bayou (creeks and stuff), and desert (sand and dunes). Army Men 3D is said to also hold some surprises that you are going to have to play to find out. 3DO's plastic franchise looks like it could be a lot of fun. It is set to make our plastic dreams come true sometime around this Christmas.

DILLION

EXCLUSIVE

It's a Whole New Game



Coming in November

989 SPORTS

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PlayStation

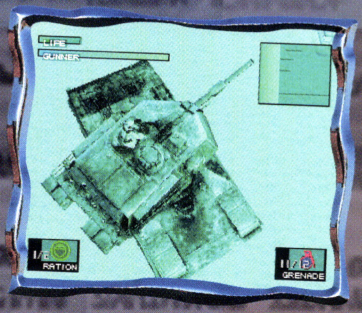
METAL GEAR SOLID



















We know we promised last issue that the next time you read about Metal Gear Solid in the pages of our magazine it would be reviewable but, it didn't quite happen that way. The screen shots you see here are from a 90% complete American version of the game that, according to Konami's wishes, was not reviewable. While this version is pretty much complete and beatable, there are still a few instances where there is Japanese text and dialogue. So, without wanting to overkill the coverage of this amazing game in our magazine, we decided it was worth it to give you our first impressions after going through this version.

First of all, this game is the bomb. In my opinion, it's one of the most impressive video games I've ever played (and I've played a lot). The way the developers at Konami of Japan have mixed the gameplay and cinema elements literally has created a new style of game. This, in my mind, is what a true interactive movie is like – not the FMV drivel that Hollywood was trying to produce a few years back. There is so much story and voice-over acting (which, by the way, is the highest quality ever produced for a video game), that some of the longer cut-scenes can take up to 20 minutes to watch. Admittedly, this isn't going to be for everybody (a few Dimension Publishing editors felt there was too much story and not enough gameplay) but, once you get through the first hour or so, you'll find yourself immersed and intrigued in the highly detailed and in-depth plotline that is unfolding before you.

As reported in our cover feature last issue, the Dual Shock is utilized in many fantastic and revolutionary ways. From portraying the heartbeat of your character as he's trying to steady his Sniper Rifle to watching Psycho Mantis (the resident psychotic telepath) magically move your controller across the floor, you'll be shaking your head in disbelief. In fact, in addition to the Dual Shock feature, Konami has included so many unique gameplay elements that you'll be constantly doing something different. From repelling down a building while being shot at by a Hind Helicopter to having to mash buttons (Track and Field-style) in order to fight the torture you're enduring, there is always a new challenge to face.

There is so much more to talk about, but I'll have to leave that for the review. Save your money, my friends, as this is going to be a must-buy come mid-October

Greg

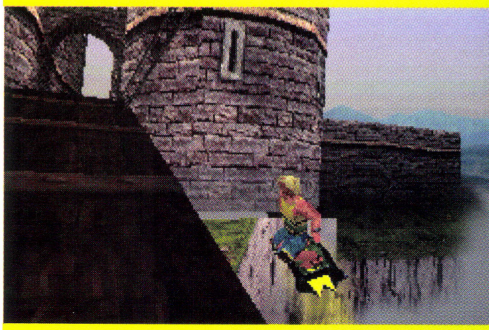
EXCLUSIVE


Also, I get you this level 6 card.
It'll get you out of that Torture Room.
psychokinesis and telepathy
in the world.
and I don't have to take orders
from you or anyone else.



Reject the tyranny of gravity with the power of the GEMBlade! Presenting the latest in hoverboard technology. The tool by which you will defy all laws... including the law of gravity! This is racing in the pursuit of pure adrenaline. No authority. No rules. No limits. Just Streak.

12 dynamic interactive 3D environments



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cut your umbilical cord to mother earth

streak

hoverboard racing



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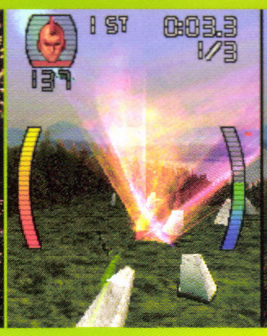
(95¢ per minute. $1.95 for fax back maps) Must be 18 years or older or have parents permission to call. touch tone phones only.

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NOT ENOUGH EMOTION IN PRO FOOTBALL? MAYBE THAT'S BECAUSE THE PLAYERS SPENT IT ALL DURING COLLEGE.



There's nothing in the world of sports quite like college football. And there's nothing in the world of sports video games quite like NCAA GameBreaker '99. This year, GameBreaker returns with a host of features its competition can't touch. Compete for the Heisman Trophy, build your own dynasty with the blue-chip recruiting mode, and listen to the legendary Keith Jackson call the action. NCAA GameBreaker '99 from 989 Sports. It's college football at its best.

NCAA GAME BREAKER 99



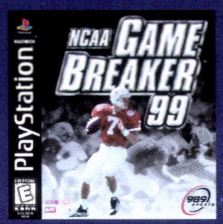




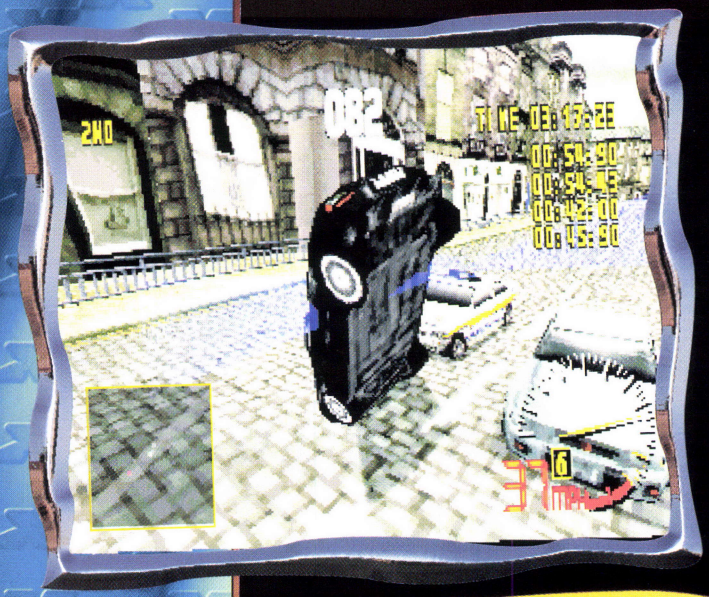


989 SPORTS

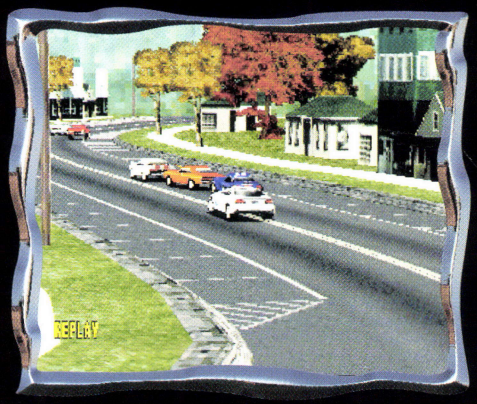
www.989sports.com



TEST DRIVE® 5



The Test Drive tradition continues with Accolade's latest edition, Test Drive 5. For those of you that may recall, the original Test Drive came out about twelve years ago as a game for the Commodore 64 (and we're not talking 64-bit, either, more like 64K). Test Drive was the original, the leader of the pack. In fact, most games, and certainly the Need for Speed series, owe an eternal 'thank you' to Accolade for creating the video game relationship between licensed sports cars, cops, and richly detailed, well designed tracks. These ideas may seem commonplace (and a bit trivial in the modern era of video game development), but Accolade has been doing this for over a decade, and they been getting closer to perfection with each new release. Last year, Test Drive 4 was arguably the best-looking driving game available for any system, but it





EXTREME



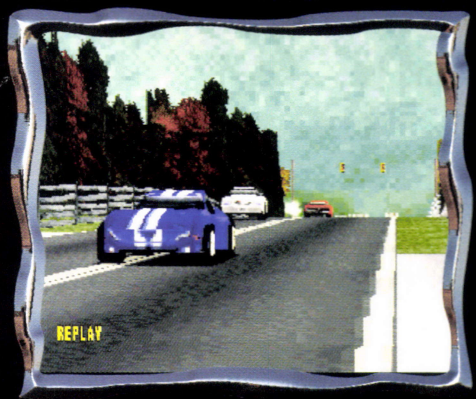






did have a few flaws that we felt kept it from being as good as it could. Well, Accolade and Pitbull Syndicate, the developer, are really good listeners, as they fixed just about everything we thought of, and then some. For instance, one of the main complaints last year was that you couldn't see the cops coming up from behind, so you had no way of stopping them from passing you (and thus pulling you over). Well, in TD5, there are two features that will help to eliminate this issue. The first is the addition of the "look behind" button, which quickly and easily lets you see who's on your tail. The second one is an improved mapping system. Instead of having the simple straight bar across the top of the screen like TD4, Pitbull put a larger road map in the lower left corner. Besides displaying the upcoming curves and turns, the map also gives you an idea as to whether the cop is coming up on the left side or the right side of your vehicle. Another option we would have liked to have seen in TD4 was the ability to play in an 'arcade' mode, where you could fly through the tracks without worrying if your car would wreck at the slightest hint of a bump or a heavily applied brake. Well, there's now an arcade mode in here although, since our preview disk is still pretty early (about 60% done), the AI settings have not been tweaked for this type of driving, so we can't report on how the arcade style works. With Test Drive 4, players could compete in different types of championships, called 'Cups'. The problem was, if it were a ten race Cup, or even a five race Cup, you could not save your progress between races, and thus had to play all ten (or five) races at one sitting. Keep in mind that the courses were very long, and this could take some time! Well, you can now save after each race, so you're free to come and go as you see fit! The last issue we had with TD4 (and this was really minor — not a real big deal) was that all of the licensed cars were Camaro and Camaro-type cars. The heck with that! We're Mustang folk out in these parts; we ain't drivin' no stinkin' Chevy (pardon the hill-billy terminology)! Our wish-list is complete — there's now a '68 1/2 Mustang 428CJ and a '98 Saleen Mustang S351. That wraps up all of things that we were looking for — fortunately, Accolade had their sights set on more than just our concerns, as they have stuffed a bunch of more cars and tracks into Test Drive 5.

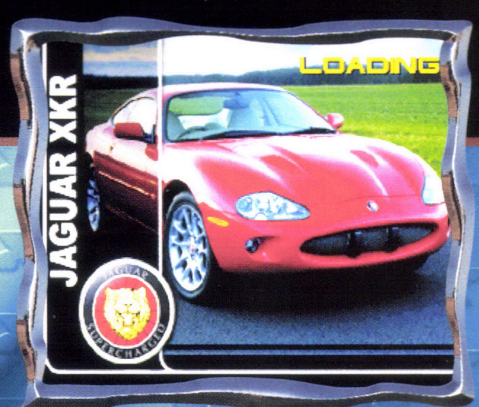
There are now 17 courses, and many of them can be raced backwards, bringing the total number of tracks to 31 — impressive! The courses are located throughout the world, in places like Russia, Japan,













California, Jamaica, Italy, Germany, England, Australia, Hawaii, Jordan and Scotland. Wow! Now if you could only get the Frequent Flyer miles! All of these tracks use a Pitbull system called MultiDynamic Environment Mapping™ that allows the high-resolution engine (512 x 240) to keep the game flying along at 30 frames per second while keeping the detail and light sourcing to the maximum. And the action doesn't slow down when two players go head-to-head (vertical or horizontal split screen). Besides the increase in the number of tracks, there are also now 40 licensed cars to choose from (although 12 of them are hidden bonus cars). TD5 features a '98 Viper, a '98 Corvette, the two Mustangs mentioned above, a '98 Jaguar XKR, a '98 Aston Martin Vantage, a '98 TVR Cerbera, a '66 Shelby Cobra 427 and a bunch of Chevys (send your hate mail to Greg).

And if all of the above were not enough, the soundtrack for TD5 features five kickin' bands; KMFDM, Gravity Kills, Pitchshifter, Fear Factory, and Junkie XL. I'm sure the reactions are mixed — some of you are saying "cool" (and you all have tattoos, right?) and the other half are saying "huh?" (and you all are getting old).

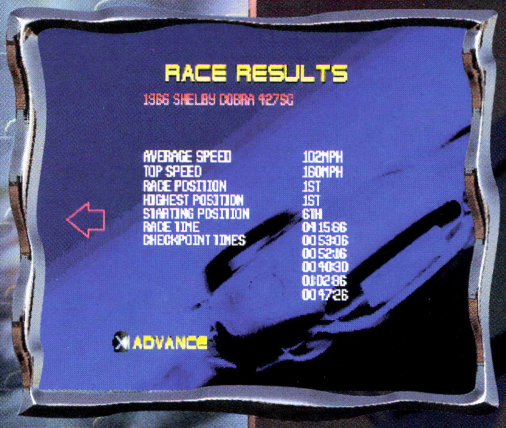
Add all this with Gran Turismo-style replays and the ability to play as the cops and Test Drive 5 looks like the best version yet. We'll see how it stacks up with the litany of other PlayStation racing games in the next issue.

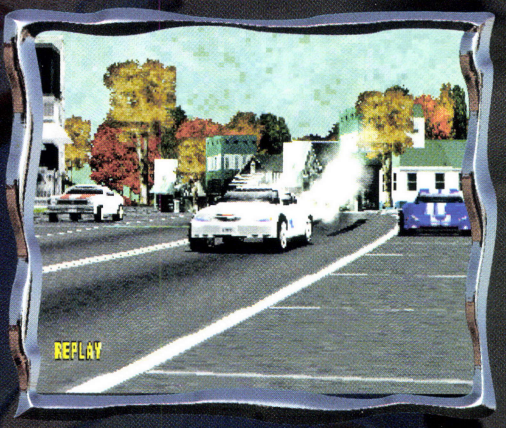
ERIC

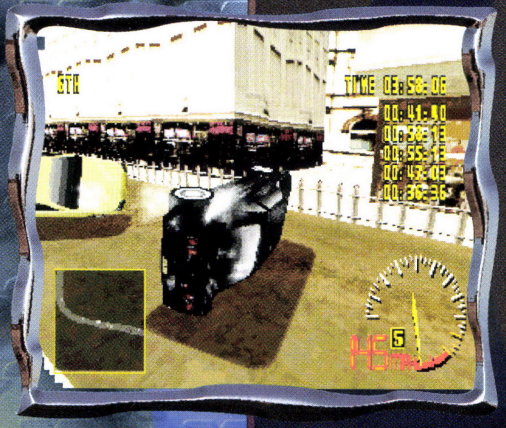








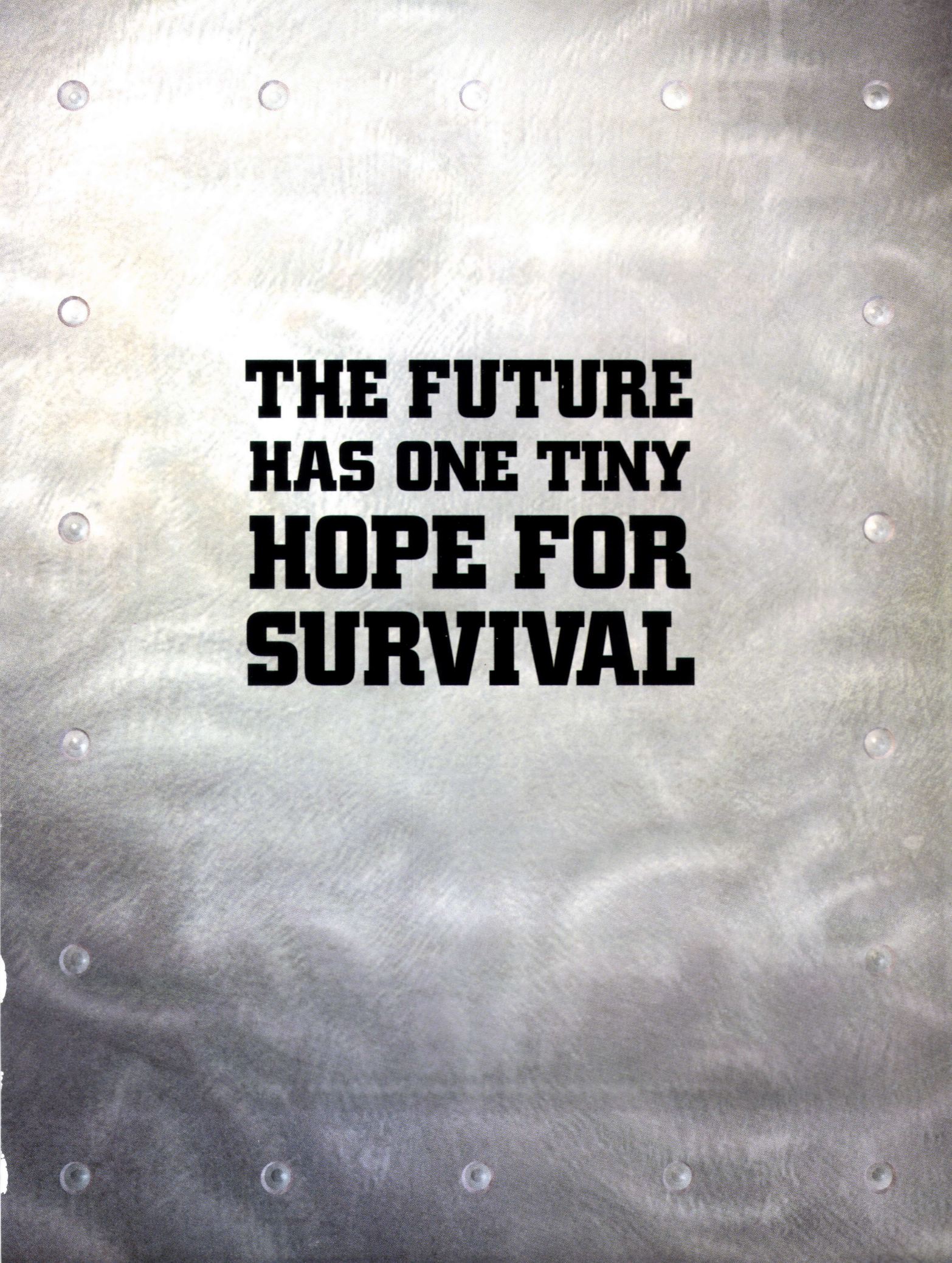




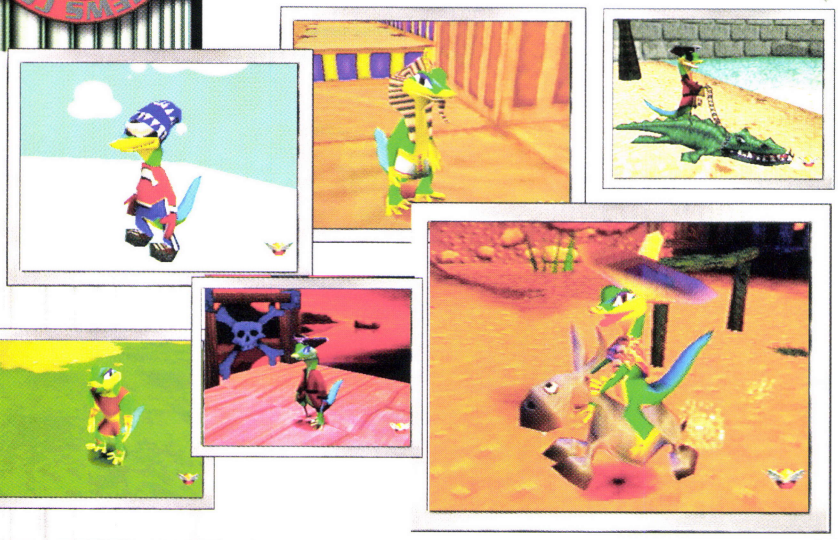




EXTREME


THE FUTURE
HAS ONE TINY
HOPE FOR
SURVIVAL

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GEX 3

EIDOS/CRYSTAL DYNAMICS • 1st QTR 99

GEX 3 is still in the early phases of production over at Crystal Dynamics but, from what we've seen so far, it's already looking awesome. While there still isn't a whole lot of information to report, what we do know is that REX (who we find out is GEX's father in Enter the Gecko) has returned and GEX is called back into action once again in order to put a stop to his no-good shenanigans. From the screens we've received, it looks like GEX will be traveling through even more wacky time-themed media levels, such as: the gunslinging in the Old West, Swashbuckling with scurvy pirates, livin' it up in ancient Egypt, and duking it out Greek-style. GEX can also now commandeer other creatures in the level and use them as vehicles to get to places he wouldn't otherwise be able to get. GEX 3, no doubt, will benefit from the advances in technology Crystal has been able to achieve with Legacy of Kain and is currently scheduled for an early '99 release.



NECTARIS

JALECO • DECEMBER

It's Miltary Madness 2! Oh, yes. You remember don't you? You had your TurboGrafx 16 sittin' on top of the TV with a pillow propped up behind your back... still in your jammies, a bowl of Cap'n Crunch next to you and milk stains forming on your chest. What? That's not you? Well it should have been! Military Madness was the first "Arcade Style" strategy game for home consoles. It was the first to feature quick, easy to grasp gameplay, with enough strategy thrown in to keep you on your toes. Nectaris is nearly the same game. The gameplay is identical, with an overhead hexagonal map on which the strategy is played out, by moving troops and tanks towards the enemy base — with animated cut scenes depicting the battle which ensues when rivals meet. The only thing different is the 3D. Otherwise, it's the exact same game you remember.



INVASION FROM BEYOND

GT INTERACTIVE • NOVEMBER

GT Interactive's Invasion from Beyond is a cool-lookin' title from new-comers, King of the Jungle. The game borrows heavily from Tim Burton's disappointing flop, Mars Attacks, and has you taking on a hostile alien race hell-bent on taking over the Earth. Like a lot of the newer titles this year, Invasion runs at an incredibly fast, sixty frames per second, while featuring a host of mission-based objectives — such as: rescuing humans, escorting helicopters and land-based vehicles to safety; dogfighting with little green men in revolving saucers and picking up and delivering objects and items. When all is said and done, Invasion from Beyond will feature: ten ships from which to choose (including secret ships you acquire as you progress), a variety of different levels to tackle, a super-smooth 3D engine and manic gameplay. The game should be reviewable in time for next month's issue.

EXPECTING

WHO THE !*#% YOU CALLIN' TINY?



"Tiny Tank's effects are some of the most impressive seen on a PlayStation... the game itself is a technical wonder."
-Next Generation



TINY TANK
UP YOUR ARSENAL

THE ADORABLE KILLING MACHINE

My name may be Tiny, but I'm also the only hope to save humanity from a bunch of brainless robots. I'm equipped with the most advanced weapons-big guns and rocket launchers-so I'm not going to take any B.S. from anyone or anything. So call me what you want, because in the end, all that matters is the size of your guns. Just ask the sorry-ass robot with a Texas-sized hole in his gut. www.tinytank.com www.mgminteractive.com

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MR. DOMINO

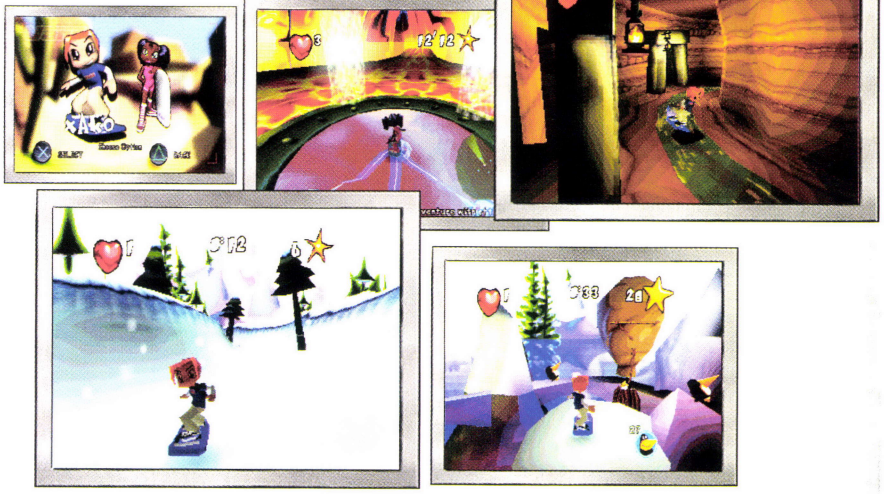
ACCLAIM • NOVEMBER

Our kooky-crazy friends over at Art Dink are at it again, creating a very different and unique action/puzzle game by the name of Mr. Domino. You might know Art Dink from some of their previous PlayStation efforts, such as Aquanaut's Holiday, Tail of the Sun and Carnage Heart. Each one of these games offered quirky and interesting gameplay, deviating from the standard formula games. Mr. Domino is no exception. In the game, there are certain switches in each level that need to be triggered by setting paths of dominoes in front of them so that the last one will fall onto the switch. (Remember Domino Man?) Once you have them properly placed, you then have to set the dominoes in motion — easier said than done. The whole time you're running around the level racing the clock, and you have no control over your speed — there's no stopping or starting. In addition, there are a host of traps and pitfalls around every corner, making things a bit more difficult. All this good, clean domino dropping fun will be available in November.

PSYBADEK

PSYGNOSIS • DECEMBER

Psybadek has been highlighted in the pages of PSExtreme for close to a year now and it finally looks like it's going to make it to retail. If you've missed the previous spots, Psybadek is a new 3D action/platform game for generation next! Instead of your standard skateboards as the mode of transportation of choice, these new kids use "hoverdeks". It's sort of like Cool Boarders in an action/platform environment, without the ground beneath you. There are 47 totally 3D levels that range from psychedelic jungles to a crystalline ice world, all involving multiple tasks required to get you to the next level. In addition, old-schoolers will find many "classic" gameplay elements in the game, such as Galaga-style bonus rounds. As far as action/platformers go, the standard rules apply: pick ups, weapons, power ups and bosses. All of this is done in relatively fresh setting with a very hip attitude (Vans shoes is a sponsor). We should have a full review next month!



RUNNING WILD

989 STUDIOS • OCTOBER

We first saw Running Wild a couple of E3's ago, when Universal Interactive was the publisher of record. Well, nobody was really buying the idea of elephant people racing against panda people and the game remained in the can. Now, thanks to 989 Studios, the game gets a new lease on life and is set to hit retail shortly. To give it to you in the short and sweet version — Running Wild features hooved racing action over six different courses. Players can choose from six different characters and the game supports up to four player (split-screen) action and both analog control and Dual Shock vibration. Our initial impression is that it will skew young. We'll slip you the verdict via review in a yet-to-be-pubished issue of your favorite PlayStation magazine, PSExtreme.



EXPECTING

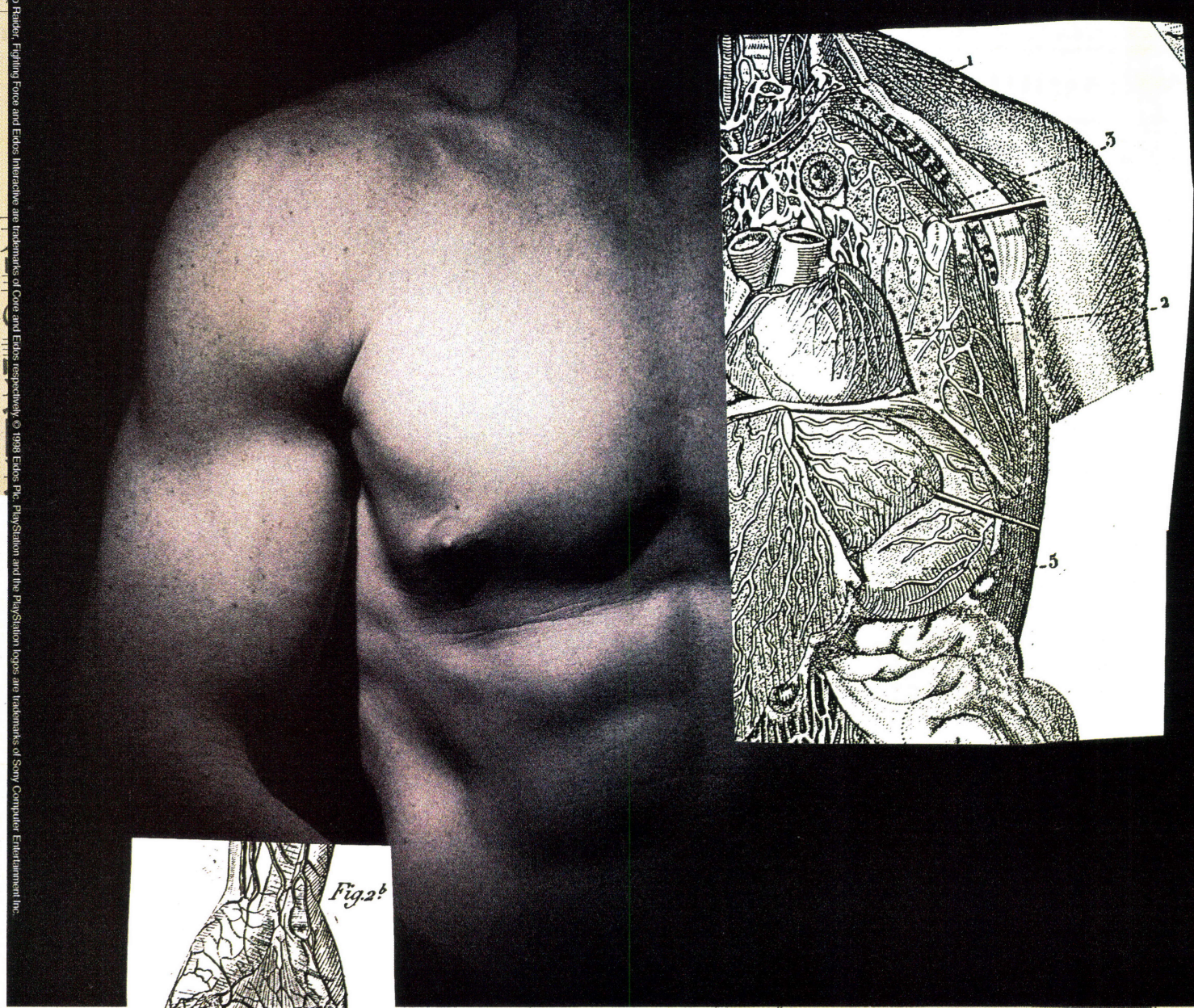


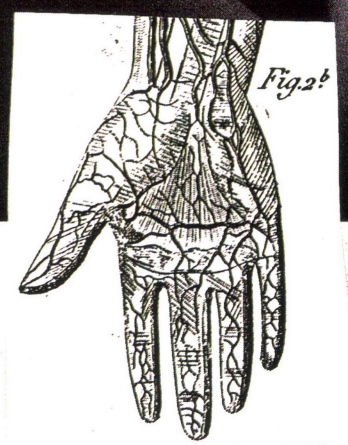
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PlayStation

米介入なら

米国防大学が昨年まとめた報告書「戦略的評価／発火点と軍事力」は、台湾独立の動きが引き金になって軍事摩擦が起きるシナリオとして、中国による①海上封鎖②ミサイル攻撃、の二つをあげている。

海上封鎖は「台湾の経済を揺るがす」、ミサイル攻撃は「重大なダメージを与える」としている。台湾本島への進攻は起こりにくいとみているが、米国は「少なくとも台湾軍への後方・戦闘支援を求められ、応じれば対中関係は苦しくなる」と指摘している。

防衛庁の運用担当幹部らは、こう想定する。

「九六年春の台湾海峡危機

最悪事態 各国望まず

To hell with the fittest.

Surviving with your organs intact is victory enough.



From the creators of Tomb Raider and Fighting Force.

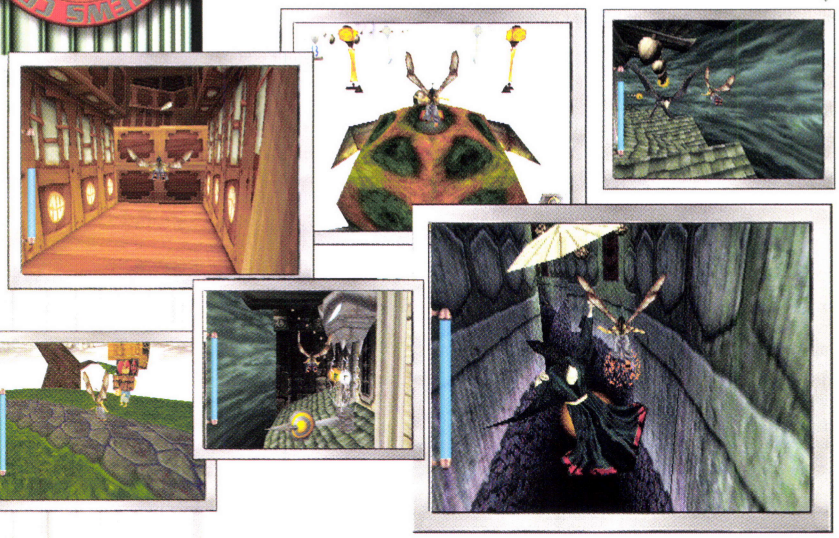
Spike-filled pits. Falling boulders. Rolling logs. You'd be amazed how they can ruin the most routine assassination. Even for a cunning and ruthless ninja like yourself. Fortunately, your arsenal of weapons, magic and moves help you do whatever it takes to forge access to levels of treacherous wilderness. To assist you in destroying every demon and warlord in all ancient Japan. To survive — whether it be fit or partially maimed.



FUTURE.PLAY

TOBU

989 STUDIOS • FEBRUARY



989 Studios' "The Diabolical Adventures of Tobu" is (according to the press release) a non-traditional platform game that features full 360 degree freedom of flight, allowing the player to move Tobu through completely free-roaming levels. Tobu needs your help to rescue his uncle, who has been kidnapped by the evil emperor Nen Hithol. The game features over 30 levels, and players have the ability to make Tobu jump, fly, dive, hover bank, glide, punch attack and charge. The Diabolical Adventures of Tobu also supports analog movement and Dual Shock vibration. We were able to play the game recently at a gamer's day that 989 sponsored in San Diego, California. The design team is definitely focusing on the feeling of flight and the ability to explore the levels through movement that is not unlike that found in "Pilot Wings 64," on the N64. Tobu is currently scheduled for a February, 1999 release.

XENOGEARS

SQUARE EA • NOVEMBER



Square Electronic Arts is gearing up (literally) for Xenogears. It will feature all of the elements you have come to know and love from SquareSoft — plus a couple of surprises. A massive storyline entangles you in a world that is in the midst of a civil war of intergalactic proportions. Xenogears has you wandering both on foot and in gigantic mechs — called "gears." Gear battles will feature a somewhat different interface and this will end up adding a lot of new options as you progress through the game. One of the really cool attributes will be the brilliantly drawn anime sequences that illustrate the story. All kinds of towns and cities will be available to explore. And, to ensure that you don't miss anything, Square will be implementing a rotating camera that you will have total control over. Xenogears will be around to keep your turkey company this Thanksgiving.

WARZONE 2100

EIDOS • DECEMBER



Eidos' Warzone 2100 is their first real-time strategy game for the PlayStation. Set on the Earth in the 21st Century, the goal of the game is to explore abandoned areas, repair damaged equipment, gather resources and destroy the opposing army's droids. Like the Command & Conquer series, you must send out your troops and seize key areas while keeping an eye on your resources and Command Droids, as their destruction could set you back enormously. While Warzone is set to ship for both PlayStation and PC, the PS version is being developed with console gamers in mind and will feature a more action-oriented and user-friendly experience. Some of the features you'll find are: a sophisticated AI system, rotatable 3D landscapes, highly-detailed, texture mapped terrain, buildings and structures, and the ability to develop Command Droids which learn as the game progresses.

EXPECTING

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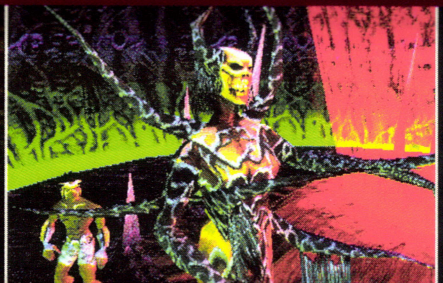
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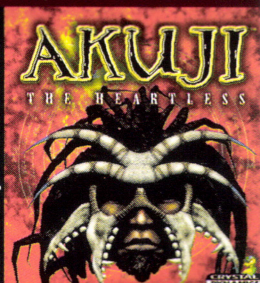
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PlayStation



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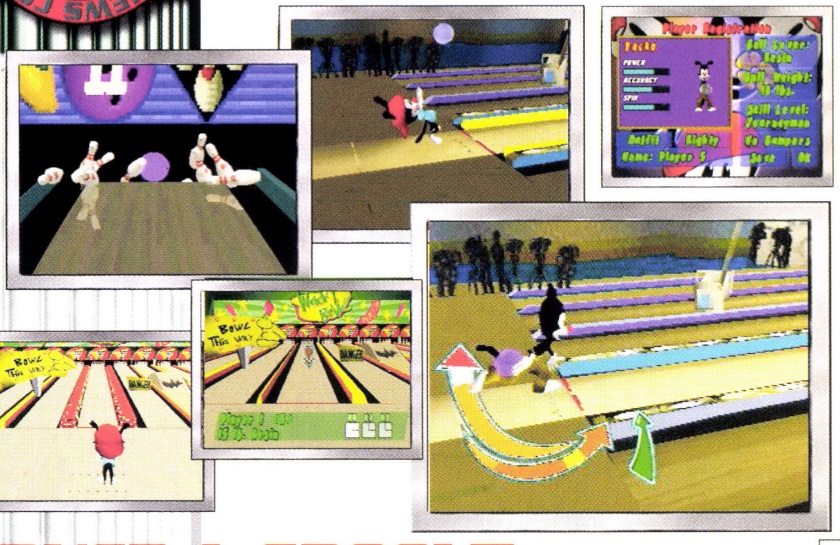


FUTURE.PLAY

TEN PIN ALLEY 2

ASC GAMES • NOVEMBER

If there is one truism in the video game business, it's that there are never enough good bowling games (just a touch of sarcasm). ASC brought out the mother of all bowling games a couple of years ago in the form of "Ten Pin Alley," one of PSExtreme's all-time favorite games for the PlayStation. THQ is bringing out a version developed by the same folks (Adrenaline) later this year and ASC is also bringing out an evolution of the original entitled "Animaniacs at Ten Pin Alley". As you might expect, they've tuned the original to skew to a younger demographic using the Animaniacs license and starring, none other than, Pinky himself. (No, not Pinkie Tuscadero from Happy Days, but the real Pinky, you know — the brain guy!) The story, if you need one, is that Pinky has decided that the only way to rule the world is to dominate through bowling. This should be a great game for parents to buy when they buy junior his/her shiny new PlayStation this Christmas. We'll let you know what we really think next month.



BUST A GROOVE

989 STUDIOS • OCTOBER

You like the night life, you like to boogie, you're a dancing queen — you gotta have "Bust A Groove." 989 Studios, taking a page (sort of) from the hit Simon Says/rap game, "Parappa the Rapper," is looking to get PlayStation gamers to shake their groove thing in this dancing competition. The game features 10 unique dancers, four hidden characters, a two player mode and tons of moves that the player must rhythmically pull off, via the PS controller, to the beat of the tune. There is also a Dance Edit mode that allows the user to pre-set dance moves before beginning competition. We've (Chris K., in particular) have had a lot of hands-on time with the Japanese version of this game and can tell you that it is a VERY addictive gaming experience. Bust A Groove is scheduled for a November release and we will review it in our December issue.



DARKSTALKERS 3

CAPCOM • NOVEMBER

It's been awhile since we've had a Darkstalkers game on the PlayStation — almost two years. In fact, the first Darkstalkers game released for the PSX doesn't even count, since it was so poorly done. This time, Capcom's come to realize the limitations of the PlayStation and instead of complaining about them, have learned to work with or around them. Darkstalkers 3 is already much faster than the first one was and it's obvious that there's still a lot of optimization ahead, so there's still lots of room for improvement. There seems to be a noticeable loss of frames of animation with this PSX conversion, but that's an understandable compromise in order to keep the game speedy. Darkstalkers 3 has 18 characters in total, counting the four new players, as well as: four modes of play, a training mode and Dual Shock vibration to complement one of Capcom's best fighting game engines.



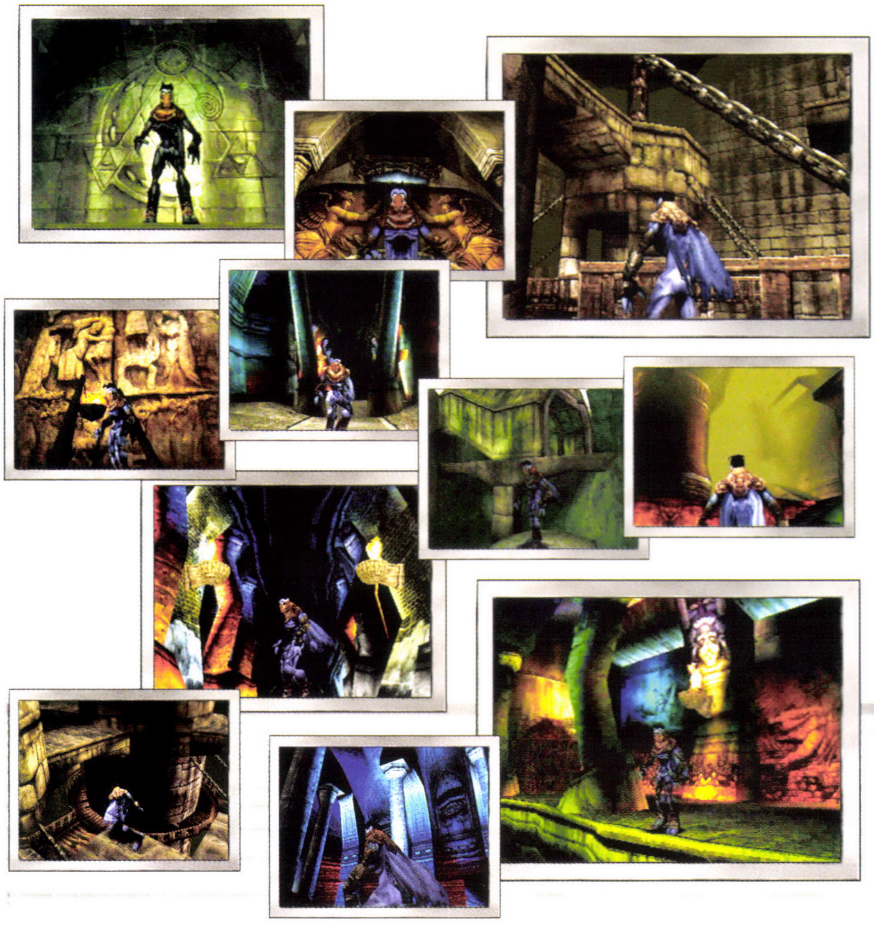
EXPECTING

TOMB RAIDER 3

EIDOS • NOVEMBER

The newest rev. of Tomb Raider 3 shows that the game is taking shape nicely. The high resolution graphics, mixed with all the different special effects, (such as the particle system, color cycling, real-time lighting, weather effects and the like) make this version of Tomb Raider the best-looking yet. In fact, Chris happened by my Mac the other day when I had the screen shots up and asked me if they were from the 3Dfx version — not bad! While the placement of the enemies is still in its early stages, some of the other features are in. Thankfully, although Core is striving to bring back more of the puzzle elements of the first, they've chosen to add even more of the vehicle elements from part two, combining the best of both worlds. What we found most exciting so far is the canoe ride down treacherous rapids (see accompanying screen shots). The animation of Lara struggling into the boat and paddling back and forth is brilliant. In addition, there will be a quad-runner ride through the Mojave Desert and a Jeep chase. One of the features still to be implemented are Lara's costume changes. For the fashion-conscious or Lara fan-boys, we'll have the Bomber Jacket, Commando Uniform (sports bra and army pants) and a tight-fitting Cat suit). The next version we'll see should be a lot more complete, allowing for us to comment on the gameplay and puzzles. Although, it's already evident that Tomb Raider 3: The Adventures of Lara Croft is shaping up to be the best version yet!





SOUL REAVER

EIDOS/CRYSTAL • MARCH

Like Metal Gear Solid and Tomb Raider 3, Legacy of Kain: Soul Reaver is another one of those games that is eagerly anticipated. Being able to actually see and play the demo that is available on the Unholy War CD is just going to whet gamer's appetites even more. Here are the latest shots we were given by the fine folks at Crystal, which showcase some of the new color and morphing effects that take place when game shifts between the spectral and material realms. In addition to the ability to morph and stretch the graphics, there are a ton of technological and gameplay features that are sure to make it a memorable experience. Here's the short list: Incredibly fluid, cinematic graphics running in the PS's 512 X 240 medium resolution mode, vertex, texture and dynamic real-time lighting, single-skin technology, high poly-counts for both Kain and the enemies, fogging effects, software Z-buffering, interactive objects, photo-realistic backgrounds, the ability to glide (riding thermals or soaring from cliff-to-cliff), multiple hand-to-hand attacks, including weapon and grappling moves, intelligent non-player characters (NPCs) whose reactions are based on Kain's previous interactions with them, the ability to recruit other vampires to your cause, seamless loading via data streaming off the CD, a transparent user interface with no unwieldy inventory screens to manage, and a dark, gothic story supported with full motion animation, n-game cinematic events, and voice-over dialogue — whew! From what we've seen so far, all of this technology is not hindering some great gameplay, and the stage is set for Crystal and Eidos to suck your gaming dollars right out of your pockets come early next year. Look for a lot more coverage on Soul Reaver in the next few months as we start to get playable versions of the game.

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PSExtreme SPORTS



EDITORIAL

Welcome to the first issue of PSExtreme Sports, a magazine within a magazine, if you will, focusing on nothing but sports and 'hobbyist' (what else do you call bowling and pool?) games. And, since I'm running the show here, just about every type of racing game will be featured in these pages, except the futuristic and kiddie types — I don't like those! Since this is the first issue, I'll have to give you a little info on how this whole thing works. First, the lovely sports bar conglomeration of video screens at the top of the page represents screen shots of all the games you'll find covered in this issue, with the exception of the center shot. For those of you keeping score, there are 18 TV monitors (plus the center one makes for 19) but only 16 (I say 'only', but that's A LOT) games featured. Should this short supply of games occur, and it probably will each month, the remaining shots are filled with games that made an impact on the PlayStation sports scene. This time around the honors go to Namco's original Ridge Racer and Konami's yet to be surpassed International Track & Field — two games everyone should have in their library. Now, the big screen, the 3x3 monster, this simply represents nothing other than the game I am currently playing most, in my free time. This month it happens to be Sony's Hot Shots Golf, which, although I reviewed the game way back in our April '98 issue, I'm still playing and loving every minute of it. If I had to vote today, I'd make Hot Shots Golf my Game of the Year choice, no questions asked!

This issue of PSExtreme marks the start of our fourth year, covering the PlayStation console longer (and, in my humble opinion, better) than anyone else. Not coincidentally, this year also marks the fourth edition of many of the sports titles. For example, there have now been (or will soon be) four GameDays, four NBA Lives, four NBA Shoot Outs, four NHL FaceOffs, and four NHLs. Many more titles (like Ridge Racer, NBA In the Zone, Cool Borders, MLB, Triple Play, and Madden) have seen three incarnations, and many more have at least a sequel. It makes some sense, too, because if you look at the sales figures, 6 out of the top 10 games sold each month is either a sports game or a racing title. Yo, Einstein, that's 60% of the market. In fact, for the month of August, Acclaim had the number one selling game for both the PlayStation and Nintendo 64 machines — WWF War Zone. Wow!

Anywho, I hope you enjoy the new sports section, and get ready next month for some serious basketball and hockey reviews. Shoot, I didn't even get a chance to talk about the whole ESPN Digital Games thing from Radical, but we'll talk again next month. Until then, I'm going to keep playing Hot Shots (and trying to beat my best of -9). Later.

Eric

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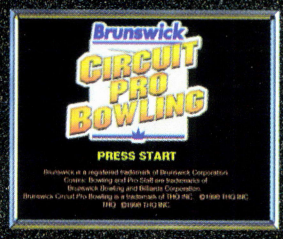


Packed solid with insane tricks and treacherous downhill runs, CoolBoarders® 3 is so realistic it'll turn your living room into a half-pipe. Lock into an authentic Burton® or Ride® snowboard and you're ready to thrash through 34 courses, 5 challenging mountains and 6 world class events. Feel the wind rushing by as you pull off thousands of combinations with sick moves like Misty Flips, Melancholy's and Sad Air. Throw in intense fighting action and 2 player split-screen racing and your teeth will be chattering long after you've left the slopes.

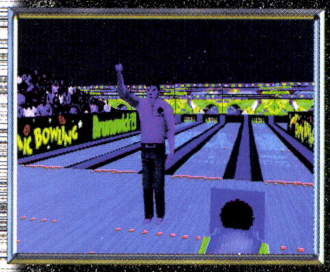
989™ STUDIOS

COOLBOARDERS® 3

DEVELOPED BY ADRENALIN ENTERTAINMENT
PUBLISHED BY THQ
WRITTEN BY MARK



BRUNSWICK PRO CIRCUIT BOWLING

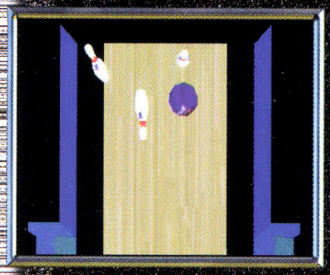


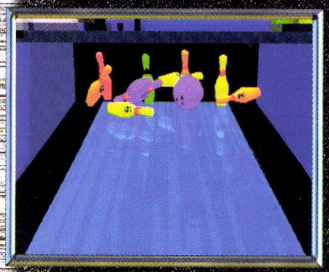
One of my favorite sports games on the PlayStation is "Ten Pin Alley" (from ASC Games), so I was interested to learn that the same developers had another bowling game in the works. If you're the type of person who laughed just now when I referred to bowling as a sport, then you probably won't appreciate the level of detail that has gone into this game. Fortunately, it is just as fun for non-aficionados as it is for die-hard bowlers.

This time around, Adrenalin decided to get more serious. To use an analogy, Brunswick Pro Circuit Bowling is to Ten Pin Alley as PGA Tour 98' is to Hot Shots Golf. That is, the game was designed as more of a simulation than an arcade-style contest. Gone are Ten Pin Alley's caricature bowlers ranging from skinny children to Peg Bundy clones. In Pro Circuit, the players are all professional males and are all portrayed in a more realistic fashion. Gone too is the irresistible background music. Pro Circuit does have a soundtrack, but its tunes fail to create the same atmosphere. Just about the only element that returns from the prior game is the "cosmic bowling" option, which Pro Circuit Tour does better thanks to the use of multi-colored fluorescent pins.

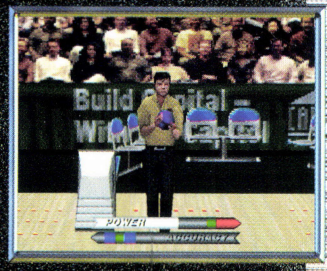


The game allows you to play as one of 13 real-life bowlers, each of whom has his own style. The game even includes their biographies in FMV! You can also create your own custom bowlers and follow them through their tournament careers in locales ranging from Las Vegas and Akron to Japan, Mexico, Germany and South Korea. Pro Circuit also includes a practice mode which allows you to set up various pin combinations as well as a "skins" game in which you earn money by bowling consecutive strikes.





There are several different camera angles to catch the "action," including stationary cameras, cameras which zoom in and out, and an overhead camera which is quite odd (I'm still waiting for the cocktail waitress cam). You can also replay your shots in slow motion from different angles. Overall, the effect is similar to watching bowling on television. Sounds perfect, right? Well, one thing is missing: pizzazz.



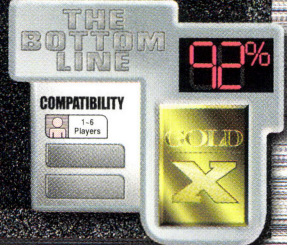


In their attempt to make the game more serious, the designers have unfortunately removed some of the elements which made Ten Pin Alley so much fun. The run-of-the-mill bowlers lack character without the slapstick animation. The Wurlitzer background music of TPA, which never let you forget that you were in a bowling alley, is gone from this version. And there's just something to be said for the ability to yell "You suck!" or "Loser!" as your opponent is about to release the ball!

There are a few other minor details which bothered me. First of all, there are no female characters in the game and you can't even create one yourself [insert "Weird Science" reference]. The crowd "oohs" and "aahs" if you get a 7-10 split or miss a spare, but it also claps every time the ball is thrown — before you've hit any pins!

After adjusting your position on the lane and your angle of spin, you've got to hit the action button at just the right moment for a perfect throw. A welcome addition is an overhead diagram which plots the projected trajectory of your ball. The length of the guideline varies depending on your skill level — the more skilled you are, the shorter the line is and thus the more challenging it becomes to pick up spares.

The bottom line is that Brunswick Pro Circuit Bowling is an excellent game which delivers the most realistic bowling experience to date, even if it is missing a little of the "Three Stooges" quality that made Ten Pin Alley so endearing.





DEVELOPED BY IDOL MINDS
PUBLISHED BY 989 STUDIOS
WRITTEN BY FABIAN

COOL BOARDERS 3



The first two versions of the Cool Boarders series were developed by UEP of Japan, with both representing the state-of-the-art for their time. They possessed a seemingly well tuned sense of speed; albeit with some rough graphics and loads of draw-in and pop-up. The tracks were on the skinny side, and the games were more racers than Extreme games. That was then, and this is now.

Enter Cool Boarders 3! This time around the game has been developed by Idol Minds, while the newly named 989 Studios takes point at the publishing helm. The effort, this time around, was to take CB3 to new heights, and it seems that Idol Minds have done just that – because this installment of Cool Boarders is the best yet, and stands head-and-shoulders above the last two. Encompassing three difficulty levels (Rookie, Veteran and Pro), CB3 is played-out over 6 events, covering 34 courses, and is navigated with the aid of up to 23 authentic snowboards, including the brands Swatch, 6 Ride and Burton. Modes of play include Single Event, Practice and Tournament. There is also a two-player split-screen mode. The events themselves cover Half Pipe, Downhill and Boardercross, as well as Slalom, Big Air and Slope Style competitions. Some of the events are point based, which is the incentive to learn the various tricks.





I was immediately impressed with the way the game handled in One Player mode. In particular, using the analog pad added some very nice "touch" to the play mechanics. Varying degrees of lean and turn can be accomplished with little effort, and the Dual Shock feature is used with excellent results. The learning curve is not very steep, until you begin to chain tricks together. Given the fact that your principal objectives are to score points by executing fancy moves and to win races, it will not take very long to learn how to ride your board. Track obstacles are well placed, and since the game has very little draw-in, you will have ample time to react to hazards before they are upon you. While traversing the mountains, the texture of the snow can and will vary. It can be packed, iced-over or even powder.







Character animations were motion captured using the skills of professional snowboarder Chris Hassel – who also served on the development team, and the results are very nice. You can perform moves like the Shift, Stalefish, Indy and Tail Grabs, in addition to flips like the Misty and Rodeo. Each move is very fluid and, upon watching the replays, one can really appreciate the level of detail that was captured. There is limited fighting, and some taunts were thrown in for fun. Another nice touch comes when sailing on jumps – you can actually hear the soft whistle of the wind through your ears as you soar through the cold mountain air. Speaking of hearing things, the introductory music comes courtesy of Guttermouth.



In the visuals department, CB3 is rather Phat! With very brief load times, CB3 cruises right along by streaming the levels directly off the CD-ROM. As a result, the levels are longer and larger, and the course designs are clever and functional. There is very little perceptible polygon break-up or glitching, as was found in the previous two incarnations of the series.

CB3 is a vast improvement in gameplay over its predecessors and is loads of fun as well. Snow boarding games may not appeal to everyone, but racing fans of any type should have a great time with CB3 – check it out!





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DEVELOPED BY STORMFRONT STUDIOS
PUBLISHED BY EA SPORTS
WRITTEN BY ERIC



NASCAR 99





Somebody gets credit for saying "The more things change, the more they stay the same," although I don't know who it could be. It was probably that Shakespeare guy — he was always saying stuff. Well, regardless of who said it, they could have easily been talking about the current state of sports video games (and to another extent, the whole video game industry). Stop for a moment, and come up with a game that isn't a sequel or didn't live in another form, just to be reborn with a new name. Uh, time's up, pencils down. Hand in that blank piece of paper. I know, everywhere you turn, and certainly in the sports gaming world, it's this 99 and that 98 and this 2 and that 3 — what are you going to do? Well, all of this brings us to my review of NASCAR 99. It was at exactly this time last year that I wrote the review for NASCAR 98. It went something like "lots of options, great sound f/x, decent graphics, solid racing experience". Well, you could pretty much slap that sentence at the bottom of this review, 'cause it still applies.





Now, for the benefit of those of you who may not have been with us at this time last year, I'll give you a quick rundown of NASCAR and what's in store for your playing experience. First, the game can be customized eight ways to Sunday. Pick the number of laps you want to race, in a percentage of the total. For instance, the Martinsville 500 is, uh, 500 laps. You could select 10% (50 laps) or 90% (450 laps), the entire 500, or just about anything in-between. There are a half dozen or so AI settings that can be manipulated, a new and improved pit mode to mess with, and a lot more. You can turn off the damage that your car would normally sustain, or you can make the damage limited so that you won't be axed from the race. Basically, NASCAR 99 lets you tune the game to exactly the way you want to play it and, when that's done, you can select to race a full season or a single race. The game keeps track of all your stats, and the play-by-play is done real nice. After twenty or thirty laps, you'd think these guys would run out of things to say, but Stormfront crammed lots of info in there (especially from Bob Jenkins — Parsons doesn't say much, except, "This ain't no Sunday drivin' ").









NASCAR 99 adds more courses, some night driving effects, and a little more polished look than last year's version. However, you may find that that's reason enough to stand in line at Wal-Mart to purchase the game, but not me. Much like Moto Racer 2 (reviewed elsewhere in the Sports Section), the additions and changes to the new title don't add up to making it a viable sequel. Granted, they're both fine games, if you don't have the earlier versions already but, if that's the case, then you probably don't want the latest version either. "Lots of options, great sound f/x, decent graphics, solid racing experience."

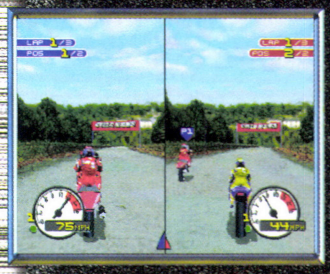
THE BOTTOM LINE
89%
COMPATIBILITY
1 or 2 Players
Analog Controller Compatible
Vibration Function Compatible
SILVER X



DEVELOPED BY DELPHINE
PUBLISHED BY ELECTRONIC ARTS
WRITTEN BY ERIC

MOTO RACER 2





1997 was an amazing year for racing games, and the original Moto Racer led the way. Delphine's addictive and joyous gameplay earned Moto Racer a 98% rating – that there's Platinum! In fact, we handed Moto Racer our highly coveted "Racing Game of the Year" award, as well. And, weirder still, Greg and I fought bitterly over who would get to do the review (he won, but he'll have the teeth marks forever). Obviously, we cared deeply for the original game and have been waiting anxiously for the sequel – and the moment has come. All hail Moto Racer 2!





Ok, so you peeked and noticed that MR2 is "only" Gold, and no longer occupying space in the high rent Platinum district – I can explain. First off, there's a ton of new tracks, thirty-six in all. However, there are really only FIVE distinct locations (Grand Prix, Sahara, Brittany, Amazonia and Forest), each having multiple tracks, some shorter requiring more laps, and some longer, requiring fewer laps. Last year, the courses seemed very original, nicely detailed, and really sharp. In MR2, the courses, especially the dirt tracks, don't seem to have the same punch. Last year, the sound of the bikes blew me away, and the camera angles made the game so fast, you could lose your lunch if you didn't wait thirty minutes (the ol' swimming rule) before playing! Well, the engine sounds are EXACTLY the same, which feels kind of cheap. With eight bikes to choose from, it would have been nice to get some different engine noises. Heck, if nothing else, make the ONE sound different from the one sound that was in last year! Speaking of sounds, all, or most, of the front-end beeps and whistles are exactly the same, and even the announcer dude at the end of the race is the same (with the same phrases, of course). Speaking of bikes, I'm pretty sure they are all the same ones used in last year's Moto Racer, with all of the same attributes and color schemes.



Are you sensing a theme here? Let's see... same, same, same, same, same, same, same. Yeah, that's about right. But wait, there is something different, and that would be the inclusion of a Track Editor. Yes, it's now possible to create your own track, from scratch, or edit one of the existing circuits, to something that better suits your tastes. But, don't try to do anything crazy now, or the computer will put the big Kabash to it. No steep hills followed by sudden death-defying drops, or big curves looping and snaking around the track. Sorry, can't do that, but you can make nice, simple ovals with just moderate twists and turns. I can't figure it out, but there must be a reason why the simplest of moves or elevation changes are met by the whole darn track segment flashing, in bright red, "can't do that!" over and over again. Well, the track editor was a good idea anyway, if just poorly executed.







Now, I've been pretty harsh on a game that deserves better, because Moto Racer 2 is a fun racing game, just like the original was. The problem is, that, much like with NASCAR 99, I get the feeling that I've already played this before, and that there's just way too much that is similar to warrant spending big bucks on the game. However, if you didn't buy Moto Racer, then you won't have the same issues with the game that I did, so it'll be a good buy. If, however, you do have Moto Racer, rent MR2 first, and see if you agree with me.

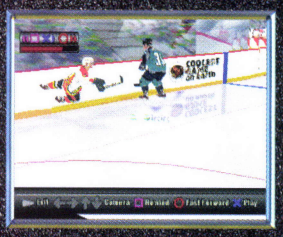


NHL FACEOFF 99

989 Studios / Killer Games / October





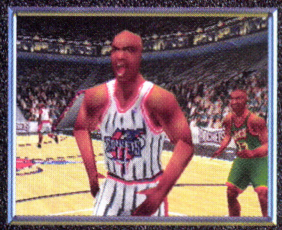


989 Sports and developer Killer Games are back for their FOURTH installment of the FaceOff series. That's right, the PlayStation has now seen four generations of this fantastic series. According to 989 Studios, FaceOff 99 will come with all of these new features; enhanced players and arenas that feature 20% more polygons and twice the number of textures, an AI system called "Authentic Hockey Intelligence™" that has players reacting like they would in NHL situations, new 3D player models that deliver the correct size and weight, two-man play-by-play featuring Mike Emrick, flashy zoom-ins and cut-away's, Icon Switching on defense as well as offense, and tons of new defensive and offensive player animations. And, lastly, there's also a new on the fly ability to change your strategy with the touch of a button – cool!



NBA LIVE 99

EA Sports / EA Sports / October





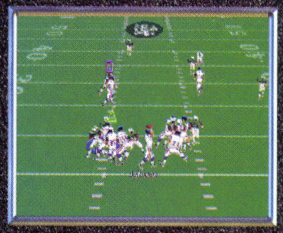


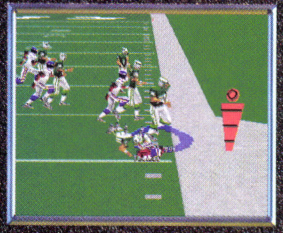
NBA Live 99 is another title entering its fourth season on the PlayStation. EA Sports has added two new features that stand-out for two very different reasons. First, the AI has been changed, and is now called "Pro-Action™" artificial intelligence. According to the fine folks at EA Sports, this will realistically represent what happens on the hardwood at real NBA arenas. The second, and more of a "where do we go from here" approach to creating new features, is that of player animations. For instance, all of your favorite players will now scowl, laugh, and make various other facial expressions, depending on the situation. Wonder if they got Sir Charles' famous one fingered peace sign in there? Additional points of interest for '99 include new on-the-court sounds (maybe Charles can follow up his nice gesture with a few pearls of wisdom) and a 3-point contest.

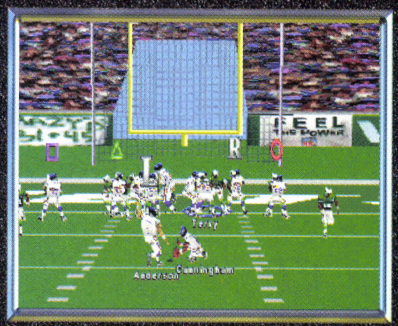


VR FOOTBALL 99

VR Sports / Padded Cell Studios / October







VR Sports let loose the Miami Man, otherwise known as Jimmy Johnson, and will simply put out this year's title as 'VR Football 99.' This game is being developed in-house by Padded Cell Studios, and will feature full polygonal characters, and NFL and NFL Players Inc. licenses. Variety seems to be the key word with VR Football 99, as there are over 30 different wrap tackle animations, 20 different ways of celebrating a TD, 10 types of catches, and 5 animations that show the QB throwing on the run. That's a pretty good start and, to give players even more variety, VR Sports has incorporated a play editor that lets you create your own plays, selecting from 15 different formations. Check out the review of VR Football 99 from our Gridiron Guru in the next edition!



NHL 99

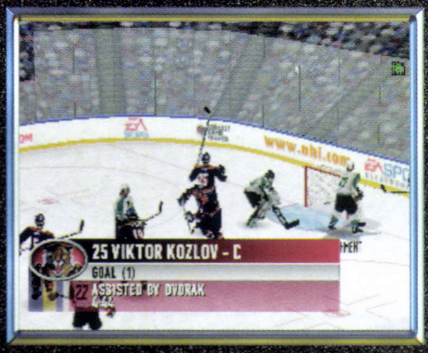
EA Sports / EA Sports / October



The NHL series from EA Sports looks to rebound from a poor showing in last year's hockey wars. By our account, NHL 98 landed in third place behind the products from Sony (now 989) and Acclaim. Judging from our readers, it was a game you either loved or hated — not a whole lot of 'tweeners. Well, for 1999, EA Sports has added new coaching strategies, more (and new) skating and goalie animations, improved computer AI, and highly detailed arenas. There's a new 'beginner' skill level, coaching drills, on-the-fly play calling, 18 international teams, and an expansion draft for the Nashville Predators. Look for a complete review next time, when NHL 99 goes head to head to head with NHL FaceOff 99 and ESPN's National Hockey Night.







NBA TONIGHT

ESPN / Radical / October







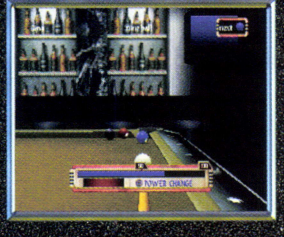
Radical Entertainment enters the ever growing PlayStation sports market this year with not one, not two, but THREE titles — hoops, hockey, and snow boarding. Radical, the developers of the Power Play series (published by Virgin) of hockey titles, has teamed up with ESPN to create a new line of sports games under the "ESPN Digital Games" banner. NBA Tonight is a full 5-on-5 simulation that features ESPN Sports Center anchor Stuart Scott and analyst Dr. Jack Ramsay doing the play-by-play and color commentary. The game looks and sounds like an ESPN broadcast, with many of the elements of the TV show being included in the game. As far as gameplay is concerned, NBA Tonight has all of the real NBA teams and players, with over 400 different animations, player introductions, complete stats, complete GM modes, and all of the features you would expect in a b-ball sim.



BACKSTREET BILLIARDS

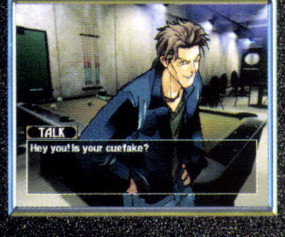
ASCII / Argent / October







ASCII and Argent have teamed up to bring Backstreet Billiards to the US. Although many may not consider playing pool a sport, but rather a hobby, we will gladly put billiards (and bowling, and even tennis) games in this section! This pool shooting simulation includes seven different styles of play — a Story mode (compete against players around town, trying win back your father's long lost cue stick), standard Pocket game (8-ball, etc.), a carom style game (bumper pool), a trick shot mode (jump over balls and around objects), a Speed variation (try to get through five levels as fast as you can), a Technical mode (clear all the balls without making any mistakes) and a practice mode (uh, practice). Backstreet Billiards has all of the features you could ask for (and then some) — check our complete review in the next issue.



NATIONAL HOCKEY NIGHT

ESPN / Radical / November







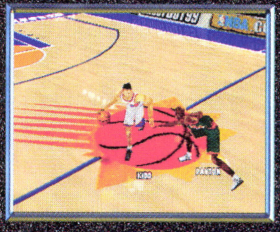
Radical Entertainment has shed their NHL Power Play series of hockey sims and started anew with the introduction of National Hockey Night, from ESPN Digital Games. The new title looks a whole lot different than the previous titles, and features a bunch of new options, personality, and features. Using all of the ESPN resources available, Radical teamed up Sports Center anchor Steve Levy with hockey analyst Gary Thorne to provide the play-by-play and color commentary. All 650 player faces have been plastered on the polygonal characters, and the players perform over 100 different animations. Look for National Hockey Night to go head-to-head with NHL FaceOff 99 and NHL 99 in the next jam-packed issue!



NBA SHOOTOUT 99

989 Studios / 989 Sports / October





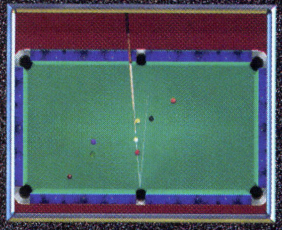


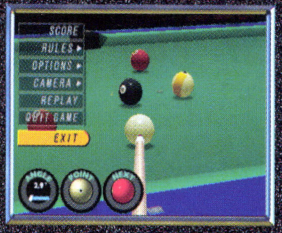
The new season brings a host of new and improved features for NBA Shootout 99. Among them, the new Total Control Shooting mechanism stands out as a feature that intrigues us. Since we haven't actually played the game yet, we can't even begin to tell you how it works, but we do know that it uses a loft and accuracy mechanism. The dunking, cutting, and passing systems have all been tweaked, and there's also a new Team Momentum Bar that simulates the flow of a real NBA game. Shootout 99 has the play-by-play provided by New Jersey Nets broadcaster Ian Eagle, and the new camera angles are said to really enhance the TV style presentation. And, lastly, there's new and improved "Authentic Basketball Intelligence" (AI) to help keep players doing the correct things (on the court, of course). The basketball wars will be waged in the next couple of issues — it should be intense!

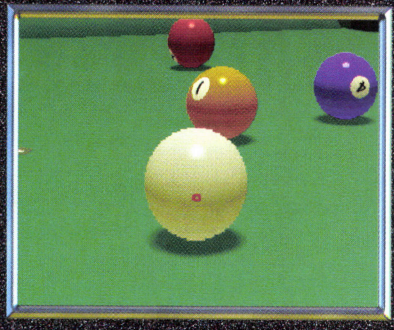


POOL HUSTLER

Activision / ASK / November







It's hard to believe that there will soon be four times as many billiards games for the PlayStation as there are boxing games — go figure! Well, Activision is bringing ASK's Pool Hustler over from Japan, and it joins games from Interplay, ASCII and Psygnosis in the Billiards library (Col. Mustard, Candlestick, Billiards Room). Pool Hustler looks to be in the PlaySation's hi-rez mode, and sports a bunch of options, sure to be found in any pool game worth its cue stick. There are modes to practice trick shots, take lessons from a master, play against a friend or two, and the ever popular story mode. Since the name is "Hustler," you'll be able to place bets on your matches, and even add wagers for individual shots — cool!



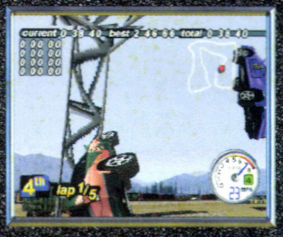
RALLY CROSS 2

989 Studios / 989 Studios / October



Rally Cross 2 is coming out soon, and it's coming with the roar of a V-12. Check out some of these features – 24 different tracks (twice as many as the original), including the usual deserts, coastlines, jungles, mud, snow, etc.; six ways to play Rally Cross 2 (freestyle, season, head-on, suicide, mixed, and single race); cars that feature real-time lighting effects and Gouroud shaded texture polygons that show off built up mud & snow as well as any dents and dings; a new customizing feature that lets you select a variety of options, including customizable two tone paint jobs; eight different cars and trucks to choose from; and, lastly, vehicles that will sink in water. Rally 2 is expected just in time for the Christmas Season.







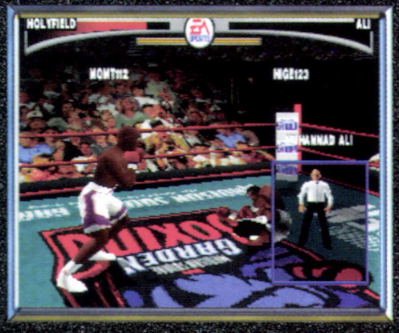
KNOCKOUT KINGS

EA Sports / Press Start / November









As most of you may know by now, Knockout Kings will be the first boxing game to be released in the states for the PlayStation, thus marking the end of a four year video boxing drought. The much anticipated Knockout Kings features a long list of famous fighters – Ali, Holyfield, Sugar Ray Leonard, De La Hoya, Hagler, Duran, LaMotta, Holmes, Marciano, Butterbean, and dozens more. Heck, EA Sports even got (Judge) Mills Lane to do the referee business, and Jimmy Lennon, Jr. to do the announcing! Now that's covering all of the angles. Of course, there's play-by-play from Sean O'Grady and Al Albert, and three different fighting modes – exhibition, slugfest, and career. The fighters are put in three different weight divisions – light, middle, and heavy weight. We're looking forward to bringing you the inside scoop in the form of a complete review in the next issue!

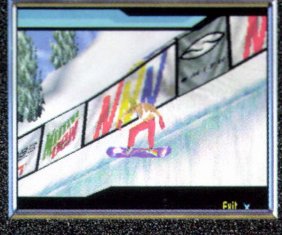
X GAMES PRO BOARDER

ESPN / Radical / October









Radical's third game previewed this month under the ESPN Digital Games banner is 'X Games Pro Boarder.' Pro Boarder is set to go head-to-head with 989 Studios' Cool Boarders 3 and all of the other snow boarding games coming down the pike. One of the things that stands out in Pro Boarders is the license of eight "well known" professionals, including Terje Haakonsen (the hackman is 5 time champ, you know), Shannon Dunn, Tina Basich and Todd Richards. Use these real-life boarders to pull off over 2,000 different combinations, and look good while you do it. There are nine different events/tracks to choose from, and a sound track full of 'sick' bands, including the Foo Fighters and Rancid. Stay tuned.

SCHOOL'S OUT.

CAPCOM unleashes explosive tag-team fighting action in Rival Schools – the most innovative 3-D fighter that teams up 14 brand new warriors united by fate. Vibrant graphics, an intense story line, outrageous new combos and Capcom's signature gameplay make Rival Schools the 3-D tag-team battle that's completely out of control.

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In the ultimate fight for justice, there is no rival!



OF CONTROL.

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EXTRA TIED

S.C.A.R.S.

PUBLISHED AND DEVELOPED BY UBISOFT

GENRE: *RACING*
AVAILABLE: *NOW*



SCARS is exactly the kind of effort that the editors of PSExtreme applaud: an original creation that does not rely on any big budget license, but that focuses on gameplay and creating a compelling play environment. This futuristic racing game, set in the year 3000 AD, borrows from many games of the recent past, including a few of Ubi Soft's own franchises, to create an interesting take on the racing theme. Let's take a closer look.



Graphically, SCARS has the look of Ubi's PC racer (one of the first to support 3D acceleration) "Pod." Its play mechanics can be directly traced to "Street Racers," another Ubi product, and indirectly to games like "Wipeout," "Mario Kart" and, a personal favorite, "Motor Toon Grand Prix." It features very nice colors and special effects, with a solid 30 fps animation clip and tons of stuff going on in the screen at one time.



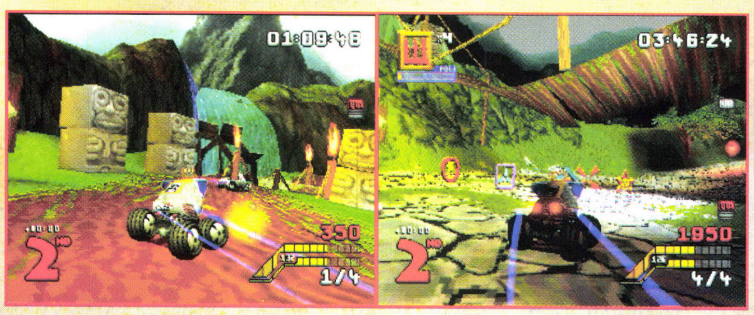
SCARS is fully analog/Dual Shock compatible (recommended), supports four player split-screen action (two or three player as well) and gives the player nine different tracks, nine different vehicles and a number of modes of play — single race, time trial, championship mode, the usual stuff.

The keys to success lie in resource management and a good sense of touch on the throttle and brake. There are a number of weapon power-ups that litter the course. Some give you turbo boosts, the ability to shoot guns and missiles, etc. While others are a little more devious, including remote magnets that stop your competitors dead in their tracks, balls that form a temporary wall and, my favorite, the "hot potato" skull icon that is on a timer... you don't want to be holding it when it runs down to zero! Of course, all of this combat is going on while you are trying to zip through the circuits as quickly as possible and finish in the top three — no small feat. In order to finish first, you will have to master the jump button, handy for those times when the other racers have sent a few traps in your direction, and you will have to take the time to learn the tracks.



This is particularly important and the single area that makes SCARS a tough game. It is easy enough to get through the first circuit (three tracks) but, when you hit the snow track, you will be crushed — unless you know how to stop and go. It is this difficulty that will present the ultimate obstacle to your enjoyment of the game but, for racing fans, it is probably a challenge that is worth taking.

SCARS is a technically solid take on the combat racing game, if not a particularly original game. Vivid Image (the game's developer) has taken a pinch of this and a dash of that and have come up with an entertaining effort that racing fans should take a look at.



THE BOTTOM LINE

84%

COMPATIBILITY

- 1 or 2 Players
- Analog Joystick Compatible
- Vibration Function Compatible

SILVER X

DAVE


TWISTED METAL III
NOVEMBER
PlayStation
RATING PENDING
RP
CONTENT RATED BY
ESRB
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EXTRA EVIL

MEDIEVIL

PUBLISHED BY *SCEA* — DEVELOPED BY *SCEE*

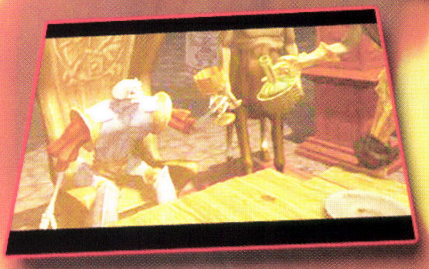
GENRE: *ACTION PLATFORM*
AVAILABLE: *OCTOBER*



I remember spying MediEvil tucked away in the back of Sony's massive booth at E3 the year before last. While I don't remember too much about what the game was like back then, I remember someone describing it to me as a "3D Ghouls and Ghosts". While the finished version, two years later, has retained some of the atmosphere and gameplay elements of that 16-bit classic, the end result is something so much more amazing and unforgettable.



MediEvil chronicles the misadventures of Sir Dan Forstesque, a once great knight that took on the evil magician Zorak and his army of undead. Unfortunately, Fortesque was skewered by an arrow in the eye as he lead the charge into battle, and never given the opportunity to gain his proper place in the Hall of Heroes. While Zarok was beaten back in the Great Battle that ensued, he wasn't exactly vanquished, and lived on in hiding plotting his revenge. The next one hundred years were peaceful, allowing the kingdom of Gallowmere and its people to thrive and flourish. During that time, the stories of the Great Battle and Sir Dan Fortesque transformed into the stuff of legends. Somehow, the people's recollections of Fortesque and the battle, passed down from generation-to-generation changed, from that of a tragic mishap to a relentless hero who took down Zarok single-handedly, losing his life in the process.



As with all great villains throughout history, Zarok has returned with a vengeance and has used his great powers to raise the dead once more — creating an unstoppable armada — but reanimating the bones of Fortesque in the process. Now it's solely up to Sir Dan to take on Zarok and his army of darkness, and live up to the legend.

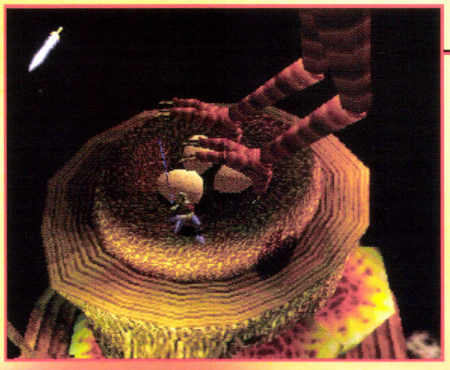


Admittedly (and unfortunately), Sony's going to have a tough time with MediEvil this Holiday Season, as it's going up against not only the flood of Christmas titles shipping between now and December from numerous third parties, but it also has competition within its own company. With such guaranteed blockbusters as Spyro the Dragon and Crash Bandicoot: Warped shipping within a month of each other, MediEvil could possibly be lost in Sony's own marketing shuffle. All I can say is, don't let yourself be swayed, this title deserves to be purchased and played at









any cost — it's that good!

In the game, you control poor old Dan, starting out with a lowly small sword and some throwing daggers. Once he leaves the safety of his crypt, his first stop is a ghoulish graveyard brimming with decaying zombies and other assorted baddies. From there, it's out into the kingdom of Gallowmere, where all sorts of danger and adventure awaits. Dan's got to use his bones (and whatever decayed grey matter that's left rolling about inside his skull) and venture out, chasing down Zarok through 21 inspired and completely unique levels.

While there is a ton of action/platforming to be had, the developers at Sony Europe have added a lot of cunning puzzle solving, giving players the best of both worlds. In each level you'll have to uncover a well-hidden Chalice of Souls. In order for Dan to take a trip to the Hall of Heroes, where he can acquire new and stronger weapons (and other assorted goodies), you are not only going to have to locate the Chalice, but fill it to 100% as well — by killing each and every baddie that you encounter. In addition to the Chalice of Souls, there are a multitude of other puzzles you'll find, from the traditional "get the key to open the gate" kind to more elaborate brain twisters, such as throwing a gold bust and a crucifix cast into a molten mixture, then jumping up and down on a bellows to melt them down — creating a crucifix in the process (which just happens to be missing from the local church and the key to continuing on through the level).



Graphically, MediEvil easily shares the spotlight with some of the PlayStation's elite titles. The overall gothic style of the game coupled with a strong 3D engine propel it head and shoulders above most in similar genres. Yes, there is a distinct, "Tim Burton-ish, Nightmare before Chirstmas" look and feel to the game, but that's what the designers were going for. With the exception of the Graveyard, each of the 21 levels in the game are completely unique and different from the last. You will be hard-pressed to find repeating textures or repetitive "themed" levels (you know, the typical snow, lava, desert, etc...). In addition, the music perfectly fits the theme of the game, drawing inspiration from the masterful soundtracks of former Oingo Boingoer, Danny Elfman.



Combining the best of free-roaming action/platforming, puzzle solving, and unbelievable graphics, music and sound effects, MediEvil effortlessly finds itself in the elite category of "must-have" games. While we knew that the game had a ton of potential early on, I think I can safely speak for most of the Dimension Publishing staff that this game is a surprise contender for game of the year. MediEvil gets our highest recommendation and the coveted "Platinum" bar in the process. Get this game, you won't be disappointed.









GREG



THE BOTTOM LINE

PS EXTREME **98%**

COMPATIBILITY

- 1 Player
- Analog Control Compatible
- Vibration Function Compatible

Combining the best of free-roaming action/platforming, puzzle solving, and unbelievable graphics, music and sound effects, MediEvil effortlessly finds itself in the elite category of "must-have" games. While we knew that the game had a ton of potential early on, I think I can safely speak for most of the Dimension Publishing staff that this game is a surprise contender for game of the year. MediEvil gets our highest recommendation and the coveted "Platinum" bar in the process. Get this game, you won't be disappointed.

PLATINUM

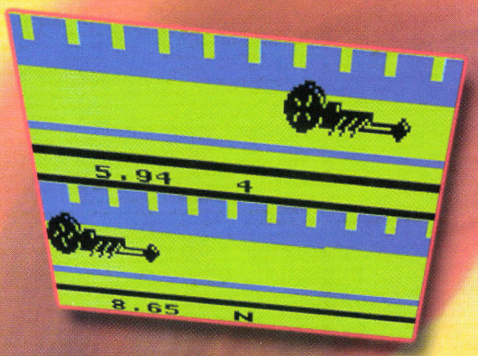
ACTIVISION CLASSICS

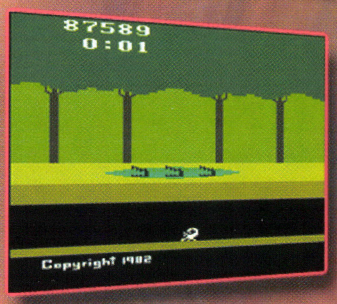
PUBLISHED BY ACTIVISION — DEVELOPED BY LIVESAY TECHNOLOGIES

GENRE: *RETRO COMPILATION*
AVAILABLE: *NOW*



I remember it well. It was the summer of '96, and we were working on the August issue (featuring Crash Bandicoot on the cover). I received Namco Museum Vol. 1 to review, and ever since, I've been the guy who gets to do all of the old school compilation disk thingys. Well, two years and a ton of reviews later, a disk entitled "Activision Classics: 30 games for the Atari 2600" has crash landed on my desk, with a thud only David Crane could imagine. Well, the good news is that I don't have to really play any of these games, because I've owned just about every one of them for about 15-18 years! No, just kidding, I really played the games on THIS disk, and Kramer can attest to this, because he would continually walk by my desk and offer up something to the effect of "Why are you still playing THOSE games", or; "Only you would be playing 2k 2600 games in an era of 32-bit, 10 million polys per second, virtual LAN based hyper blah blah blah", or something like that. Well, Chris, I was playing them because they were FUN games, and they still are!

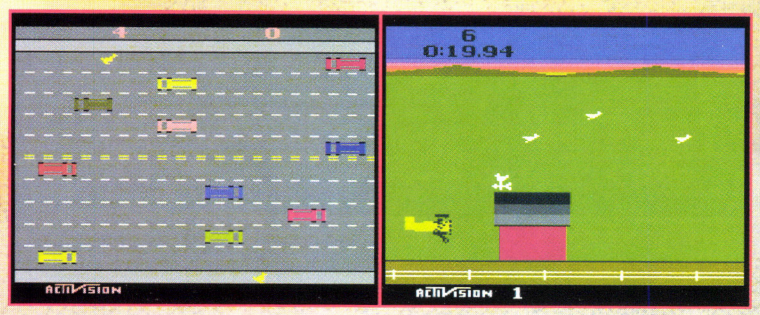






Well, what you're going to get for your thirty bucks is thirty pretty good games, some being more "classic" than others. Running quickly down the list, the disk includes 29 Activision titles; Barnstorming (truly a classic), Boxing (oh yeah), Chopper Command, Cosmic Commuter, Crackpots, Dolphin, Dragster (one of my favorites), Enduro, Fishing Derby (I actually spent my allowance on this game), Freeway (blatant Frogger copy), Frost Bite, Grand Prix (a fine racer for its time), Hero, Ice Hockey (who didn't like this game?), Kaboom (still need a paddle controller to play it correctly), Keystone Kapers (on my top five all time list), Laser Blast, Megamania, Pitfall (see below), Plaque Attack, River Raid (a real classic, and the first game I can remember being designed by a female), River Raid 2, Sea Quest, Skiing (wore out my thumb playing this one), Sky Jinx, Spider Fighter, Stampede (an odd concept that grew on you), Star Master, and finally, Tennis (many, many hours were dedicated to this one). The 30th game is actually an Imagic game (a company that did AMAZING games for the Intellivision) called Atlantis, which did pretty well on both the 2600 and the Intell. All of these games play just like they did on your 2600, complete with sound f/x and all.

Anyway, for the same thirty bucks you would spend on the disk, you could probably get on the Internet and buy the games for .50 each, and a 2600 for ten bucks. Throw in five bucks for shipping, and there's your thirty smackers. But, if you don't want to hassle with all of that, but still want to play the games, then you couldn't go wrong with Activision's Classics.



THE BOTTOM LINE

82%

COMPATIBILITY

1 or 2 Players

SILVER X

ERIC



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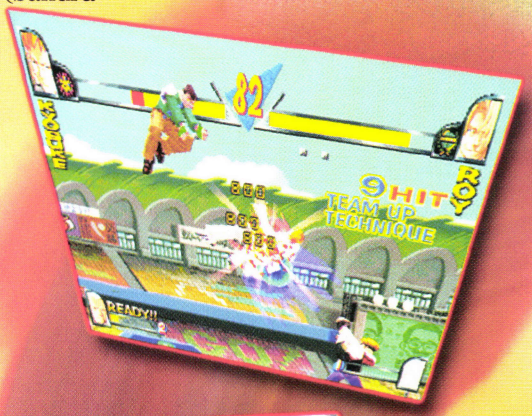
RIVAL SCHOOLS

PUBLISHED AND DEVELOPED BY *CAPCOM*

GENRE: *FIGHTING*
AVAILABLE: *OCTOBER*



Despite having what may be one of the stupidest names for a fighting game ever ("United By Fate"? What the?), Rival Schools has ended up being one of Capcom's best new fighting games. It's got the necessary Street Fighter heritage (Sakura makes an appearance in the game), a new fighting engine and it's in 3D.



Capcom showed us last year that they can still do great new games with the excellent PlayStation version of Street Fighter EX and Rival Schools continues what will hopefully become a new tradition for the company. Unlike SF EX, Rival Schools was developed by the internal Capcom arcade staff, a new unit started up within the past three years with the specific intent of creating 3D games. It looks as though the company may be finally hauling clear of the rut they dug themselves into in the early part of the Nineties.

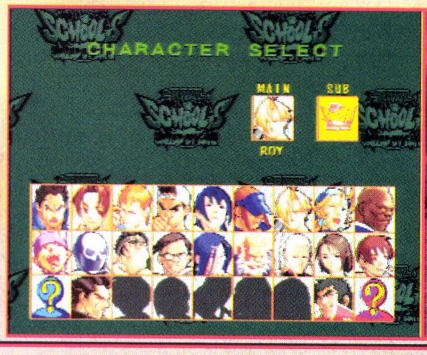


What distinguishes Rival Schools? Like most Capcom games, the strength is in the engine. Rival Schools has an excellent core, making it fun for both beginner and expert players. This fine balance is very difficult to achieve, especially with 3D fighters. To me, both the Virtua Fighter and Tekken series are overly complicated, with too many variables for distance and alignment in the controls to make the games fun for beginners. Even Star Gladiator, Capcom's first 3D fighter, suffered somewhat from similar problems. With Rival Schools, you can jump into the game with even a limited knowledge of fighting games and figure out the way it plays fairly quickly. Capcom has also now taken to dropping move lists into the loading screens, which lets you memorize some of the special attacks before you even begin playing.



Rival Schools is built around Street Fighter movements on the controller (the inevitable dragon punch and fireball moves), with four buttons (eight, if you count the dodge and grab buttons assigned to R1 and R2) instead of six. The elimination of the last two buttons makes a lot more sense for PlayStation gamers, as the standard PSX controller has four buttons easily accessible on its face.

Just like in real high school, this game is full of jocks, babes, dorks, cheerleaders, fat boys, rich kids and homicidal gym teachers. The characters are forgettable, really; none of them seem to have the staying power or personality of Ryu, Ken and company. Each character has something











about him or her that suggests either student or teacher, whether it's their sports clothing, lab coat or sailor dress. With 25 characters available (including the four hidden ones), you're sure to find two characters that match your playing skills in Rival Schools.

Capcom is obviously really hyped on the whole tag-team thing. Since the first X-Men Vs. Street Fighter game, the company has produced four other tag team games. With Rival Schools, instead of choosing a single character, you select two players for your team. When you have enough energy in your meter, you can press a kick and a punch together to summon your other character on screen to help you with a Team Up attack. Your team attacks will change dependent upon the characters you're using, as well. When the male character uses the Team Up Technique, the female will run out and add to his health or attack power. The male character, on the other hand, will combine to attack the opponent in a spectacular manner. The Team Up attacks are fast and do a lot of damage, not to mention being a lot of fun to watch.



Rival Schools is also a two-disc game. The first disc is perfect for those just looking to play the straight arcade version of the game. It looks and acts just like the arcade game, with no extras, for those occasions when you just want to beat heads for a while. Disc 2, called Rival Schools Evolution, is the bonus, full of all kinds of extra goodies for PlayStation owners. In addition to having the one player game on it (go ahead, give disc one to a less fortunate friend — spread the joy!), Evolution also has a Lesson Mode, where Hayato will teach you the basics of combat, Group and Tournament Modes for multiple players, a League mode, Cooperative and an Extra screen, where new goodies will open up when you finish the game or complete the Training Mode. Everything can be saved to your memory card as well, so you don't have to re-enter codes everytime you play.



I like fighting games (especially Capcom ones; go figure), but I'm not the best player in the world. I don't even like to stick quarters in the arcade games, for fear of being humiliated by an eleven year old. But I can hold my own against other average gamers. I appreciate Rival Schools' ability to be played no matter how good a gamer you are, as well as the game's fast learning curve and strong focus on teaching the player. Even though the character designs are kinda goofy (enough with the teenage panty shots, you perves), the game itself is lots of fun. Fighting fans will not be disappointed with this title.









CHRIS



PS EXTREME

THE BOTTOM LINE

98%

COMPATIBILITY

- 1 or 2 Players
- Analog Control Compatible
- Vibration Function Compatible

I appreciate Rival Schools' ability to be played no matter how good a gamer you are, as well as the game's fast learning curve and strong focus on teaching the player. Even though the character designs are kinda goofy (enough with the teenage panty shots, you perves), the game itself is lots of fun. Fighting fans will not be disappointed with this title.

GOLD X

EXTRA

NINJA

PUBLISHED BY EIDOS INTERACTIVE AND DEVELOPED BY CORE

GENRE:
ACTION PLATFORM
AVAILABLE:
OCTOBER



Astute readers might remember that Ninja graced the cover of our August issue. In that issue, we took an early look at the game and we told you that the developers had "never lost sight of their main goal, which was to make an arcade-style, 3D action/adventure." Well, it's true, the game is very much an arcade-like game. Like Fighting Force, Ninja is little more than a 3D update to old school beat-'em-ups like Final Fight or Streets of Rage.



Yes, yes, Ninja is attempting to bring back the spirit of classic side-scrolling action games, the kind of games that all but disappeared after the rise and dominance of the fighting game genre. In the old days, you knew how to fight the baddies that approached, since they were coming at you from either the right or the left. Ninja suffers because of the transition of this gameplay mentality into the more complex world of 3D. At times, your Ninja can be throwing manic blows in the entirely wrong direction, as you attempt to hit an enemy just a few degrees off from your current heading. It would have been nice if the designers had included some sort of auto-targeting (a feature that I usually hate, mind you) to help you lock on to the closest enemy.



And you can't defend yourself in any way, although the enemies can. In the old days, you weren't allowed to block incoming attacks because companies like Capcom, Konami or Data East wanted you to continue dropping quarters into their machines at a feverish rate. This tradition was continued onto the 8 and 16-bit home platform translations to disguise the relative lack of depth and brevity of these games. In 1998 (almost '99, to be fair), seeing continues in a game is a sure sign that it's either A.) shorter than Danny DeVito, B.) less interesting than dinner conversation with Al Gore, C.) more shallow than Leonardo DiCaprio or D.) all of the above.



Because of Ninja's 3D isometric camera view, you're going to lose sight of lots of bouncing goodies that roll behind the trees and vanish from view. That's no good, especially when you're so desperately reliant upon points and power-ups to survive. Your character will also sometimes vanish from your view, hidden behind large trees or walls. And, even though this is a 3D game, you cannot alter, switch, change or move your camera in any way, shape or form.

While the gameplay has a few rough edges, the 3D world that created these difficulties is detailed, colorful and well-rendered. The game is easy to get into, the environments are attractive and the overall package is worth considering, even with the frustrations that the game's point of view present. The game is, obviously, aimed at the younger player and the average 8-14 year old will have a good time with it. If you are a little more "mature" than that, you will want to rent Ninja before buying.



THE BOTTOM LINE

82%

COMPATIBILITY

1 Player

SILVER X

CHRIS


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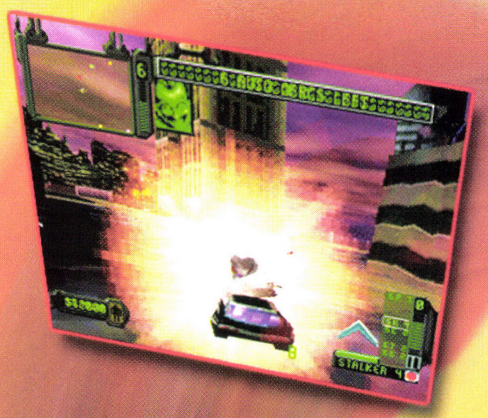
ROGUE TRIP

PUBLISHED BY *GT INTERACTIVE* — DEVELOPED BY *SINGLE TRAC*

GENRE:
DRIVING COMBAT
AVAILABLE:
OCTOBER



If you were lucky enough to have read our world exclusive in the May issue, you are no doubt familiar with Rogue Trip. Well, here it is, the long awaited car combat game from the developers of the highly acclaimed Twisted Metal series. For a variety of legal reasons, Rogue Trip can't be called a sequel to anything related to Twisted Metal, but it's been created by the same people and company, it's just published by a different one (GT Interactive). SingleTrac, the developers, have tried very hard to create an all-new gaming experience, while admittedly relying heavily on the Twisted Metal roots. 989 Studios will be bringing out Twisted Metal 3 later this year, but it is being developed internally at 989 Studios. As we mentioned back in May, the goal with Rogue Trip is to take the vehicular combat genre to its next logical level, by refining all aspects of the current experience. This is where SingleTrac's split with Sony actually helped the development of the game, by being forced to look at it from an all new perspective. What follows is the end result of a total re-engineering effort.







Rogue Trip takes place in an all too familiar post apocalyptic world that is sinking ever faster into a disease and poverty infested abyss. The one thing that the lucky populace of this new world order have to look forward to is the annual family vacation. Problem is, some dude named "Big Daddy" rules the vacation industry with an iron fist and has kept the unadulterated joy of a week at "Weeny World" with the wife and kids away from your average, everyday citizen. So, if you haven't quite figured it out yet, what we have here, is a "Road Warrior" meets "National Lampoon's Vacation" kind of game. Your job, as a highly qualified "Automercenary" is to transport your illegal tourist across the border into a totally unauthorized vacation at Big Daddyland. To succeed, you need to escort your tourist to a number of photo opportunities, battling other automercenaries along the way











who want to take your tourists from you.

Determined not to create a thinly disguised clone of the Twisted Metal series, SingleTrac has gone to great lengths to develop a unique gaming experience. The gameplay has gone beyond the traditional one-on-one (or one-on-many) death match of the TM series. By adding the photo-op requirement, the strategy element of the game has been taken to new heights. In fact, you could easily describe Rogue Trip as a strategy game with an action element instead of the other way around. Like other SingleTrac titles, the control and level design are outstanding. You can easily sink into this game and not recover for days. Graphically, Rogue Trip is certainly leaps and bounds ahead of its cousins, but certainly not state-of-the-art. SingleTrac games have always moved so fast, it's been hard for the visuals to keep up, specifically the textures have always been a little rough around the edges. Rogue Trip is definitely the best of the bunch! Interestingly enough, the sound is what had the biggest impact on me. It's incredible. The quasi-surf/hillbilly rock tunes are top notch and add an energy factor never seen before in a game like this.



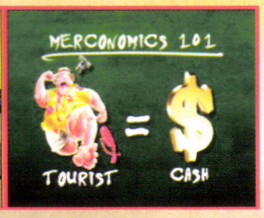
Much has been written and will continue to be written about the link between Twisted Metal and Rogue Trip. To a certain extent, we are doing a disservice to the gaming community, as not every adventure game developed by Eidos is the same, nor every vehicular combat game developed by SingleTrac is the same. Although SingleTrac has used their considerable experience from TM to develop Rogue Trip, it truly is a new experience with many new gameplay elements. Certainly there are similar games available, but none pull it all together like Rogue Trip. The lush graphics, incredible sound track, intuitive level design and overall fun factor are unparalleled in this category and ultimately make Rogue Trip a must buy for anyone interested in experiencing the best that this little gray box has to offer. Don't even think twice, just go out and buy this game and prepare to erase a considerable portion of your free time this holiday season.











ALEX



THE BOTTOM LINE

PS EXTREME

95%

COMPATIBILITY

- 1 or 2 Players
- Analog Control Compatible
- Vibration Function Compatible

The lush graphics, incredible sound track, intuitive level design and overall fun factor are unparalleled in this category and ultimately make Rogue Trip a must buy for anyone interested in experiencing the best that this little gray box has to offer. Don't even think twice, just go out and buy this game and prepare to erase a considerable portion of your free time this holiday season.

GOLD X

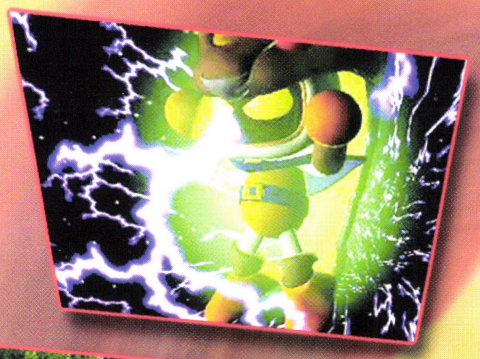
BOMBERMAN WORLD

PUBLISHED BY *ATLUS* — DEVELOPED BY *HUDSON*

GENRE: *PUZZLE*
AVAILABLE: *NOW*



Hudson's cheerful bee logo hasn't changed at all in the past thirteen years, much like the company's main (only?) money-maker, Bomberman. The first Bomberman popped up on the original 8-bit Nintendo system and has gone through more video game platforms than any other company's franchise character: Gameboy, PC Engine CD, Super Nintendo, Turbo Graphics, Saturn, PC, Nintendo 64, even a Virtual Boy title. To date, Bomberman has appeared in 33 different games, edging out stalwarts like Mario, Sonic and Mega Man.



And yet, over all these different games on varying platforms, the gameplay itself has changed very little. Sure, the graphics have changed to reflect the hardware capabilities, but the essential blow-up-your-friends element that made this series an instant classic back in the day remains unchanged. Hudson has tried to shake up the series format a bit with Bomberman 64 — which tried to combine Bomberman gameplay with Mario 64 camera angles and perspectives — and the upcoming Bomberman racing game (which most likely will not see a release on these shores), but it seems that people are happiest with the plain old format that was perfected on the Super Nintendo.



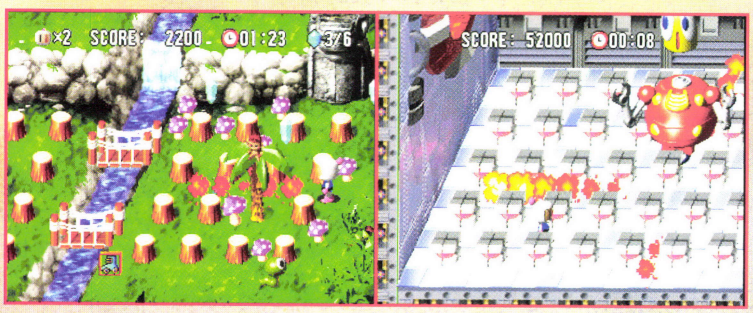
Bomberman World comes with the requisite single player game that is, like all previous Bomberman games, horrible. The difference with this one is that the single player game is worse than before. The slightly skewed isometric perspective is possibly more frustrating than Bomberman 64's 3D. This three-quarter view makes it tougher to judge where your bombs are being placed, sometimes resulting in an untimely death when you were sure you were tucked out of the way of the blast.

Hudson has also rendered all the animations for the game, which makes Bomberman seem much slower in this incarnation than ever before. You can hardly waddle away from the bomb you've just placed before it goes off on you.



If you've never played a Bomberman game before, shame on you. Skip immediately to the Battle Mode, ignoring the Single mode altogether and select Battle Royale. The secret to Bomberman is its multiplayer craziness, so try to rustle up a few friends. There are a number of options to choose from, as well as different stage configurations to mess around with, but the classics still remain the best.

Of all of Bomberman World's myriad problems, one of the most annoying is the inability to quit out of a game once you've begun. Call me crazy, but I thought that Sony required software publishers to include a quick way to get back to the main menu without having to hit the reset button. There were many times while I was playing through one of the boring single player games that I just wanted out. It's flaws this simple and basic that make Bomberman World a stinker of a one-player. Don't blow your dough on this game unless you've got a multi-tap and four friends that come by your house to play games regularly.



THE BOTTOM LINE

72%

COMPATIBILITY

- 1 or 2 Players
- Multi Tap Adaptable 1-5 Players
- Vibration Function Compatible

BRONZE X

CHRIS



DUE SOON.

ALIEN
RESURRECTION
THE GAME

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EXTRATITLED

bushido blade 2

PUBLISHED BY *SQUARE EA* — DEVELOPED BY *SQUARESOFT*

GENRE: *FIGHTING*
AVAILABLE: *NOW*



Bushido Blade fans rejoice — the Square Electronic Arts connection, delivers the sequel to one of last years most unique fighting games. This is definitely not your typical sword-fighting duel, as it includes realism and an incredible story line.



It has been eight centuries since a bitter battle saw the Sue family fall to the Kagami's. After the bloodshed, both families formed schools that would train their members to be elite samurai assassins. After countless generations of preperation, the Sue's now intend to go forth and reclaim their sacred sword, Yugiri, but the Kagami's have intercepted their plans and are ready for the vengeful battle to begin.



What makes BB2 different from other fighting games? My good friend Pibb puts it best; "Bushido Blade is the game for anyone who ever asked, 'How come Vega's claw doesn't just kill Ryu!' Indeed, despite the presence of a razor sharp set of foot-long claws, hits from Vega were among the weakest in the game! Bushido Blade corrects this and is the most realistic fighting game since Karate Champ. What makes the game so authentic (and revolutionary) is its unique system of recording damage. There are no life meters in Bushido Blade (or power gauges or clocks, for that matter). Damage is determined by the attacker's strength, skill, weapon being used, and the location of the hit. Direct hits to the head equal death, while a grazing wound may only slow down the defender or cripple his/her use of certain limbs. Battles are also more exciting because a single blow from a heavily damaged character can still instantly kill his/her opponent. While weapons have been used before in fighting games, never as effectively. This was tragically the case in Masters of Teras Kasi. Everyone wanted to like a Star Wars-based fighting sim. But as soon as I struck Boba Fett in the head with Luke's lightsaber and saw the bounty hunter still standing ... well it was embarrassing for all parties involved.

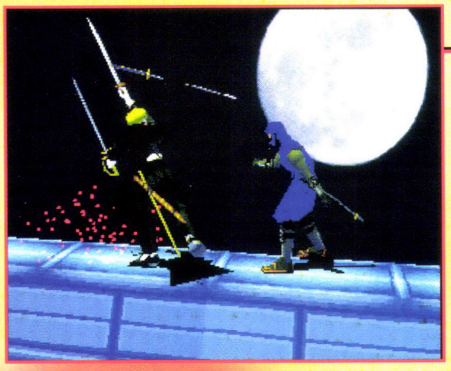


Aside from offering the usual variety of characters (over 18) possessing various traits, BB2 also permits characters to select their choice from among 6 different weapons ranging from a 10 lb. broadsword to a 6 ft. yari. The number of weapon/character combinations makes for a very varied game. Additionally, combatants









fight in any of 18 different stages, all of which permit characters to interact with them — making players change their fighting strategy depending on the level. Throw sand, snow, or dirt in your opponents eyes. Fight in a foot of water. You can even practice your Paul Bunyan imitation, chopping trees.

There is a tremendous amount of gameplay in BB2. The story line involving these two families is completely engrossing. Both families start off with 3 characters, along their travels they are met by additional family members who will offer their assistance. Through voice-overs and FMV's, the story progresses. Each character is fighting for the same purpose, but each of their story's progresses a little differently. You will want to play as every character just to see how they are involved in the mix. There are so many intricacies to this game that I feel I could go on, but in the interest of attention span I will summarize some of the cooler features.

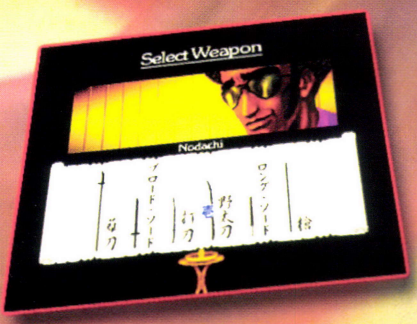


There are a ton of combinations and every character has 3 stances for each weapon. All character's have their own special move (called Karami Waza) and also a sub weapon — including knives, swords, frogs, and battle cries! There is a whole "Yin/Yang" concept going on (it's in the manual). Awesome 2 player options include linked PSX's and group battle modes. There are also a wide variety of one player options, including different view points. The 1st person point of view is one of the coolest fighting game options I have ever seen! There is nothing like looking into your opponent's eyes before stabbing them in the neck with a Katana blade. Each character progresses along a different path so that I felt like I was always taking a different root to get to the enemy family's dojo.



The things that make this game stand out and differentiate itself from the rest of the fighting flock may also be the things I have a gripe with. BB2 is not like other fighting games — the actual gameplay seems a lot slower than others. Advancing requires a lot more patience and technique then I am used to. The graphics seem a bit bland compared to other titles entering the market. Some moves are difficult to pull off, especially jumping. And, maybe it's just me, but sometimes it would hurt a lot when I got killed — it just wasn't fair!

BB2 is definitely a special breed of fighters. It is rich and immersive with tons of options. It requires patience and thinking, something that is not associated with a lot of games in the genre. I found myself getting completely wrapped up in the storyline and I was anxious to find out each character's story. While not for all fighting fans, BB2 will be an engaging event for many.









DILLION



THE BOTTOM LINE

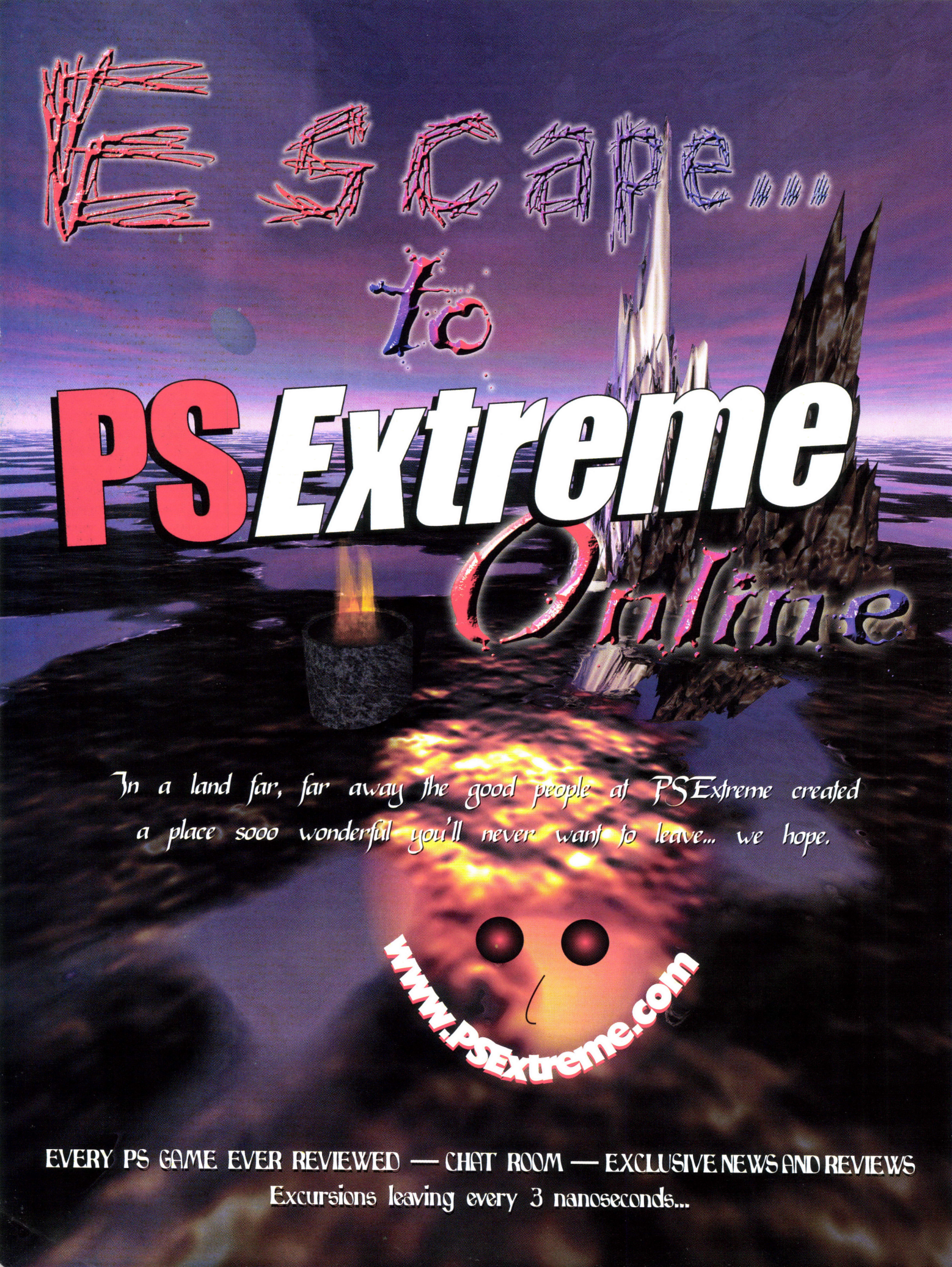
PS EXTREME 90%

COMPATIBILITY

- 1 or 2 Players
- Link Cable 2 Consoles
- Vibration Function Compatible

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MOTORHEAD

PUBLISHED BY *FOX INTERACTIVE* — DEVELOPED BY *GREMLIN*

GENRE: *RACING*
AVAILABLE: *NOW*



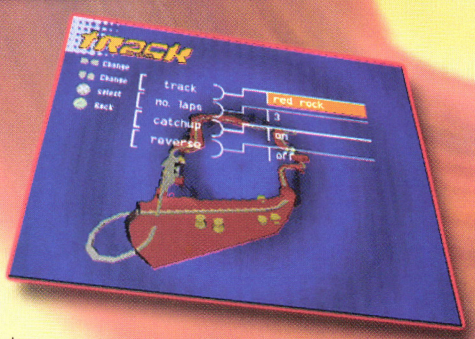
Yahoo! Another racing game! All kidding aside, I am actually quite fond of the genre. In the three years that I've owned a PlayStation, I've played some truly great racing games — Ridge and Rage Racer, Motor Toon GP, the odd-numbered Need For Speeds, Test Drive 4, Grand Tour Racing, and Gran Turismo. Even non-automobile racing games such as Wipeout XL, Moto Racer, Bravo Air Race, and Turbo Prop Racing have been enjoyable. Each year the new crop of racers gets better looking and more innovative. On the other hand, it is probably the most crowded genre there is. Just about every company and their mother has put out a racing game at one time or another. A lot of average games, which fail to offer anything new and exciting, get left behind even though there really is nothing wrong with them. Sadly, this might be Motorhead's fate as well.



As with most racing games, there are a variety of vehicles to choose from, each with its own set of characteristics — speed, acceleration and grip. You begin the game with access to three of them and can earn six more. Likewise, there are only two tracks to start with but you can open up six more. The locales range from seaside to city driving, and because they are not really oval circuits, many of them have 90° turns and narrow passageways to traverse. Most races take place at dusk or night to accommodate the fogging effects, although there are nice shades of sunset colors and lighting effects.



There are several modes of play, including two-player split screen, time trials, ghost modes, and a league championship in which you compete against other cars and earn points depending on your final race position. There are two camera views, inside the car and behind the car, and the game is compatible with the Dual Shock analog controller. A nice option is the "quick race" selection which puts you back in the most recent race without having to re-select the car, track, type, difficulty, and number of laps. Speaking of the number of laps, you can choose to race 1, 3, 5, 10, 15, or, in the event you have several hours to kill, 25 laps.



Um, that's about it.

You might ask yourself "Well? How did I get here?" or "This is not my beautiful wife!" You might also ask yourself "Why buy yet another racing game for the PlayStation? What is it about Motorhead that distinguishes it from the rest of the competition and makes it a worthy purchase?" Good









question. Unfortunately, I just couldn't find the answer.

There are no licensed muscle cars or high performance vehicles to drive. You can't take tests to earn a license or purchase new parts to upgrade your vehicle. There are no police cars chasing you. You cannot shoot at other cars or run off the road to find secret shortcuts and hidden items. There are no death-defying jumps, interactive track hazards, or cartoon fantasy tracks. Despite the intro and game menu graphics, the cars and tracks aren't even that futuristic looking. In essence, the game is a plain and simple racer — albeit a very nice looking one. But, in a crowded market, beautiful graphics alone aren't enough to capture your attention for very long. We've been spoiled and have come to expect more.

You can play Motorhead at 60 frames per second, although this reduces the number of competing vehicles to two. If you choose the standard 30 frames per second rate, you can race five additional cars. Either frame rate is acceptable, but 60 fps is obviously more crisp and clear. Motorhead looks like a coin-op racing game. The graphics are so smooth and seamless that you might think you are playing an N64 game (that is meant as a compliment, despite a similar high incidence of fogging effects). Of course there is not as much detail when running at 60 fps, and the draw-in from the fog will bother some people, but the game is still so nice to look at that most players will find the lesser detail to be an acceptable tradeoff for increased speed.



This is a hard review to write, because while nothing really stands out as excellent about the game, nothing bad stands out either. The music is a rock/techno mix, which I am personally starting to tire of, but that has become standard for racing games. Switching from the in-car to behind-the-car view in the middle of a race makes the screen spin and disorients you temporarily, but how many people are going to switch back and forth? The game may be a little on the difficult side for the average player. I found the cars to be very "loose" to control, except for the ones with the strongest grip, and those were too slow to catch the competition. The cars do have horns, which is always a plus in my book, but there are no extras such as headlights or turbo boosts. The weather does not change, and unless I am missing something, there aren't even mirror modes of the tracks. The courses, as nice as the graphics are, seemed nondescript. While each has slight variations, you don't remember anything special about them when you later try to choose one based upon the names.



Motorhead is the best-looking PlayStation racing game to date. Unfortunately, that's about the only thing it has going for it. Aside from the beautiful graphics and the screaming 60 fps speed (and a hypnotic loading screen), there is really nothing else to pull you in. If you just bought your PlayStation and don't already own Gran Turismo, Rage Racer, or Need for Speed III, you may want to check this game out. On the other hand, if you are like most people and already have more than a few racing games in your collection, this one is probably a better rental. It isn't bad, but it isn't great either.









MARK



THE BOTTOM LINE

PS EXTREME

86%

COMPATIBILITY

- 1or2 Players
- Analog Controller Compatible
- Vibration Function Compatible

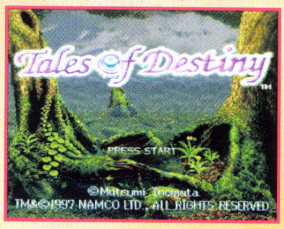
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SILVER X

TALES OF DESTINY

PUBLISHED AND DEVELOPED BY NAMCO

GENRE: *RPG*
AVAILABLE: *NOW*



Funny thing happened when I loaded up Namco's "Tales of Destiny" and began to look at the product for review... my PlayStation vaporized and, in its place, a Commodore Amiga appeared! I'm sorry but the idea that SCEA would approve this game for retail sale is absolutely mind blowing. To even hypothesize that Namco, Ltd. — a company noted for its technical prowess (in Japan) and with its important historical role in the development of the PlayStation, could even consider putting out 16-bit software like this is unthinkable.



Tales of Destiny is an RPG — graphically crude, with childish animation and dialogue and a story that has been told three too many times. It is reminiscent of the dozens of Japanese RPG's that never made it to American shores in the 16-bit era — the ones that the hardest of hard-core gamers were crying for and that American game publishers treated like the plague. I thought Namco releasing "Point Blank" in the states was some sort of cruel joke... now I see a trend being established.



The problem with Tales of Destiny is not that it is a bad game... it is average. But, an average game with sub-par graphics trying to go head-to-head with Final Fantasy 7 or, heck, Wild Arms — a game that sported better 16-bit visuals over two years ago, is in a bad, bad position. I would expect to see something like this as part of a five games-in-one, Namco Museum package.

The story begins with your character being interrogated on a sailing vessel, after being awoken from a little nap you were taking. The powers that be do not like the answers that you are giving them and they are convinced that you have stowed away to find "IT" — whatever "IT" is. You desperately try to convince them that this is not so, but they take your sword and beat the crud out of you, then send you out to swab the deck. You? You don't know a thing and, based on the "dialogue" that comes from your speech bubbles, you don't seem to have the brain power to EVER know anything. From here, the adventure begins to unfold and you start talking, fighting and building up the hit points... yawn.



If it sounds like I am a tad too cynical with regard to this title, you have to forgive me. There is so much good software out on the PlayStation, and so much more great stuff coming this holiday season, why spend it playing old-looking stuff that features a re-tread story. And, for what? The retailers could care less about it, you aren't going to buy it, Namco isn't going to sell it, and it will be below 10 bucks within a few months. So, what's the point? What do we want from Namco? Sales figures tell us "Ridge Racer" and "Tekken" games, and anything that features their trademark technology. Well, Tales of Destiny is none of this and it is so easy to dismiss... that's what we'll do... Tin!



THE BOTTOM LINE

89%

COMPATIBILITY

1 Player

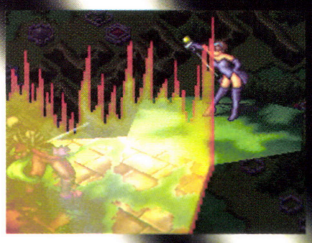
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EXTRA TED

UNHOLY WAR

PUBLISHED BY *EIDOS INTERACTIVE* — DEVELOPED BY *CRYSTAL DYNAMICS*

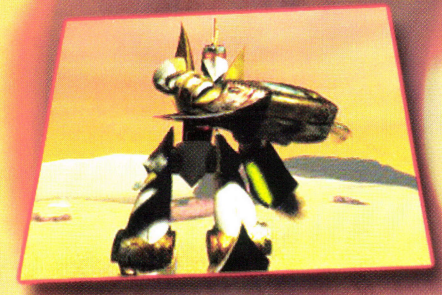
GENRE: *COMBAT/STRATEGY*
AVAILABLE: *NOW*



It will only take a moment, for those of you that have played Star Control, to realize the gameplay found in The Unholy War is not unfamiliar in nature. TUW is a 3D combat/strategy game set in a science-fantasy environment, where doom is being dealt at the hands of a rogue cyborg species, and tactics play an important part of developing a victorious plan of counter-attack.



The game opens with a stunning computer-graphics cinematic, depicting the Teknos infiltration of the planet Xsarra; which has been at peace since the days of an ancient war. In that war, the native Arcanes won and maintained rule over their home planet. Coming to disrupt this peace are the Teknos, an extraordinary technological race on the verge of extinction. They, selfishly, seek salvation from the resources of Xsarra. Crash-landing on the surface, Teknos' armaments begin to surface from the depths of the wreckage, instantly wreaking havoc on the unsuspecting Arcanes. Needless to say, the mystical Arcanes aren't planning on taking this lying down. So it is with the wit and mastery of their swordsmen, angels and predatory beasts, that the Arcanes plan to wage a formidable war against the all-too clever and well-equipped Teknos. Instantly, the Arcanes counter with magic, spells, and other old-world methodologies, while the Teknos rely upon their technologically adept weaponry to wage deadly war against the once peaceful Arcanes. This is where the player steps-up — to take command (of either side) and wage war.





Two modes of play set the stage for engaging the enemy. In Mayhem Mode, the player is allowed to control a set of characters in a series of head-to-head, one-on-one battles. The player can assume the role of either the Arcanes, the Teknos or a mixture of all of the combatants — which allows for battles against the same race. Mayhem can be played against a human opponent or the computer controlled units. In this mode, each fighter has three available attacks. These attacks, and other attributes, can be powered-up during the sequence by picking up spheres that randomly appear on the battle-grounds. Mayhem is carried out through a total of 14 zones that encompass hazards (such as weather effects), puzzles and varying terrain. In addition, there are 14 different classes of characters to command. The object: Kill all the opposing fighters and you win. The fewer combatants you lose, the better your overall rating. Characters are lost in battle when their health is











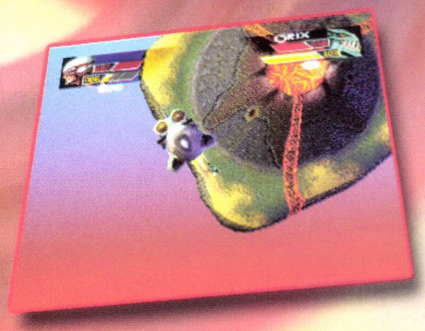
fully depleted. Power-ups can augment the health status of weakened players. And despite the term "Unholy" being a part of the title, this is not a "turn the other cheek" scenario. "Kill or be killed" and "I got 'em first" play a significant part in being successful in Mayhem Mode.

Then there is Strategy Mode, which is the more enticing of the two, and what gives TUW its deep replay value. In Strategy Mode, your focus is territory and tactics. The basic objective is to destroy all the enemies and capture their fortress. This is done in a turn-based manner, using a hexagonal grid layout for the terrain. Adding to the excitement of strategic battle is the need to mine for AUR; the precious metal that is the currency du` jour for procuring extra forces and powers. While you collect your AUR, you can also choose to retire old and used warriors for half their procurement value. This allows the player to staff-up with the warrior complement of their choice — a nice feature, because you can easily become more competent with one type of warrior than another. Each character in TUW possesses certain attributes that vary from Mayhem Mode to Strategy Mode. So deciding "who" to place "where" can be just as challenging as figuring "where" to place "whom"?! By making smart placement choices and ultimately outmaneuvering the other side, you can achieve certain victory over your unfriendly neighbors. Just as in Star Control, once two opposing forces meet on the same swatch of territory, Mayhem Mode becomes active, and the real-time battle commences, until there is a victor. Afterwards, you are propelled right back into Strategy Mode for more battle-of-wits gameplay. Once you have been able to successfully gain access to the enemy's fortress, they can no longer generate new warriors from within. It is then that you must finish off the rest of the remaining enemy forces to claim victory.





The game functions well with either digital or analog input, and after a small learning curve is easily played. Despite the initial orientation issues and the seemingly small battlefields in Mayhem Mode, TUW sports colorful graphics, fluid animations, innovative level designs, some varied character attributes and terrific gameplay. I would have to conclude that Eidos and Crystal have a hit title on their hands. The premise of doing battle that involves wit and developed skills is a good foundation for a game. The fact that TUW makes for a serious two-player gaming experience, and comes bundled with a playable "Legacy of Kain: Soul Reaver" demo is simply the icing on the (proverbial) cake.









FABIAN



PS EXTREME

THE BOTTOM LINE

90%

COMPATIBILITY

1 or 2 Players

Analog Control Compatible

The game functions well with either digital or analog input, and after a small learning curve is easily played. Despite the initial orientation issues and the seemingly small battlefields in Mayhem Mode, TUW sports colorful graphics, fluid animations, innovative level designs, some varied character attributes and terrific gameplay. I would have to conclude that Eidos and Crystal have a hit title on their hands. The premise of doing battle that involves wit and developed skills is a good foundation for a game. The fact that TUW makes for a serious two-player gaming experience, and comes bundled with a playable "Legacy of Kain: Soul Reaver" demo is simply the icing on the (proverbial) cake.

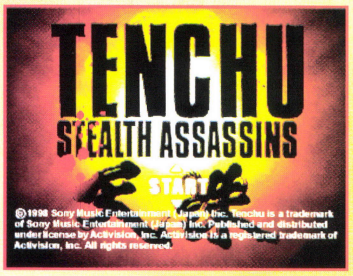
GOLD X

EXTRA TIED

TENCHU

PUBLISHED BY *ACTIVISION* — DEVELOPED BY *SONY MUSIC JAPAN*

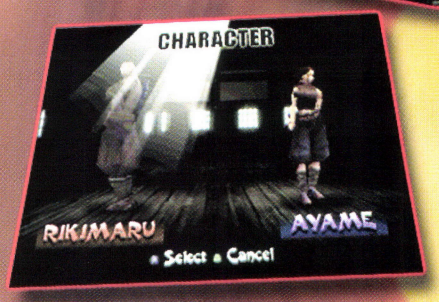
GENRE: *ACTION/ADVENTURE*
AVAILABLE: *NOW*



My first exposure to the martial arts came from the song "Kung Fu Fighting," a G.I. Joe with Kung Fu grip, and the Saturday cartoon "Hong Kong Phooey." (Yes, the '70's were a weird decade!) It wasn't long before our culture took an interest in all things Far Eastern-zen, Bruce Lee, Shogun, chow mein — and this interest carried over into videogames such as Kung Fu Master, Karate Champ, and Mortal Kombat.



Of course, the quintessential Asian videogame character has always been the ninja. There is just something cool about a warrior who blends into the shadows and kills enemies without warning. Yet, from Ninja Gaiden to Ninja Golf, most videogames have ignored the fundamental element of stealth and have instead rewarded mindless "slicing and dicing." Until now.



In Tenchu, you are a ninja in the service of a benevolent and wise ruler in feudal Japan. As his weapon against evil, you are sent on various missions, ranging from rescuing a prisoner to assassinating a corrupt official. During your missions, you will encounter enemy soldiers, deranged cultists (sans black Nikes), gun-toting pirates, other ninjas, wild dogs, a bear, and even a friendly cat. All must be dispatched quickly and quietly (except for the cat — believe me, I've tried!). There are no button-pushing or switch-pulling puzzles involved — your missions are complete when you reach a designated area and defeat the boss(es).



Tenchu is not a game for the impatient. If you want to remain undetected, you've got to wait until just the right moment to strike. An indicator at the bottom left of the screen tells you how close enemies are, as well as their mental status. There are four states of awareness: "Why am I stuck on guard duty?," "What was that?," "Hey! There's a Ninja!," and "Which way did he go?" Of course, if you are a Han Solo-type who prefers a straight fight to "all this sneaking around," there is nothing to stop you from running wildly through the levels. Of course, this will usually result in your death. Even if you manage to survive, you'll receive a lower ranking since your score is based upon the number of undetected kills. Why care about a ranking? Well, aside from your pride, attaining the highest ranking gives you access to more powerful weaponry.

There are a lot of things I like about this game. The graphics, while basic, definitely set the mood. Enemies wear various costumes and carry different weapons, and there are nice environmental touches such as falling snow, run-



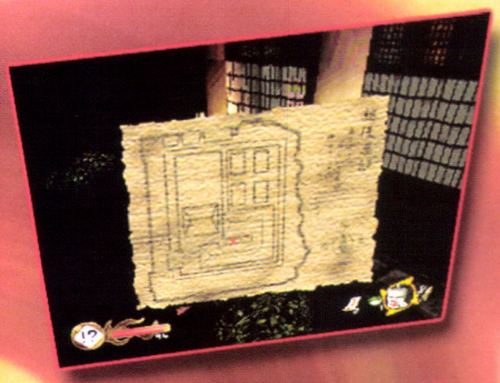






ning water, and glowing embers. In terms of gameplay, the grappling hook works wonderfully and allows you to traverse rooftops. Weapons all have different effects, and there are a variety of fighting moves and killing blows. Although your character does not visually show damage, Tenchu otherwise attempts to be realistic. If you try to use a health pack in the midst of a heated battle, for example, your opponent will knock it out of your hand. Arrows shot at you can also hurt or kill other enemies you may be fighting with. Overall, the game draws you into the experience.

Now, the criticism. First, Tenchu's music is a mixed bag. The practice mission features inappropriate light jazz. Certainly this is not music to slash throats by! While other levels feature Japanese or classical-style music which fits better, the soundtrack usually builds up to a loud crescendo. Either no music at all or something more subdued would have sufficed. Sound effects are used appropriately, but the shouts of "What?," "Show yourself!" and "Where are you?" are the same for nearly every enemy. The voice acting of the main characters is also pretty bad, and it doesn't help that they have to read dialogue such as "It is a shame that fate denied you the chance to be a happy, normal woman."



The game is not without a few technical flaws as well. Camera placement is the most important element of a free-roaming 3D game. The more confined the space, the harder it is to get a good view of the action. 3D games also give rise to clipping problems — allowing you to "see" through walls and floors. These are most noticeable when your character gets too close to a wall or an intersection of walls and floor. Since Tenchu requires you to maneuver in cramped locales and hug walls to avoid detection, the problems seem magnified. While such problems do not make the game unplayable, they can still be frustrating.



When Activision picked up Tenchu for release in America, it promised several changes — two new levels, a new 180 degree roll move, and improved enemy AI. For some reason, analog controllers are no longer supported even though the vibration is. Although I never played the Japanese version, I think that the AI still has room for improvement. It is too easy to get an enemy to lower their guard after you've been spotted. If it were me, once I was hit in the neck by a shuriken I would definitely remain alert! Finally, even though the two new levels are nice, all of the ten levels are rather small in size. There is some replay value in trying to earn a better ranking, but once you've gone through a level you know where the enemies are and what to expect. There is also only limited value in replaying the game as the other gender since the missions remain the same.

Despite occasional camera difficulties, Tenchu is a lot of fun to play. It is refreshing to be rewarded for being patient, and there is nothing like it out there (at least until Metal Gear Solid is released). There are other pure fighting or exploration games which play a little better, but none which combine the two genres nearly as well. If you have the urge to skulk through the night, and don't mind that the game can be completed in days rather than weeks, I think you'll like it.







MARK



PS EXTREME — THE BOTTOM LINE

89%

COMPATIBILITY

1 Player

Vibration Function Compatible

Despite occasional camera difficulties, Tenchu is a lot of fun to play. It is refreshing to be rewarded for being patient, and there is nothing like it out there (at least until Metal Gear Solid is released). There are other pure fighting or exploration games which play a little better, but none which combine the two genres nearly as well. If you have the urge to skulk through the night, and don't mind that the game can be completed in days rather than weeks, I think you'll like it.

SILVER X

EXTRA TITLED

MASTER OF MONSTERS
DISCIPLES OF GIAI

PUBLISHED BY ASCII ENTERTAINMENT — DEVELOPED BY TOSHIBA EMI

GENRE: *STRATEGY*
AVAILABLE: *OCTOBER*

If you had a Genesis system back in the '80's you may have heard of, or played the original Master of Monsters. Being a huge fan of the original, staying up many a nights, battling my friends for hours on end (partially because one game would take a couple hours), I was very excited to hear that ASCII Entertainment was releasing an updated sequel. Master of Monsters: Disciples of Giai (MoM) however, would be better called a kind of port of the original, rather than a sequel. ASCII is about the only company I know of that would even take the chance on releasing such a non-graphical game as MoM.



I suppose I should explain what kind of game MoM is for those of you that haven't played the original, although if you weren't a big fan of the original then I'd suggest you stop reading now, because I highly doubt your going to enjoy the "MoM experience." Anyway, this is what MoM boils down to: MoM is a turn based strategy game played out on hexagon based maps. The game works like this; You choose a Master, each having their own abilities and magics, and are placed in "your area" of the map. When it is your turn, you can summon monsters and place them in any hexagon around you. You can then send these newly summoned monsters out to help you accomplish your ultimate task, which is killing all the other masters on the map. Along the way, you will need to take over towers which allow you to summon more monsters and you can also try to combine monsters together to create the ultimate fighter. Your master can utilize different kinds of magics, like heal and meteor, which can be used once per turn. Once you have moved all your monsters and are happy with what you've done, your turn ends and all the other players on the map get to summon and what not. Battles occur when two monsters come into contact. These too are turn-based, and are automatic.



Master of Monsters' graphics are just a tad better looking then the original, which is quite a disappointment when considering all the technological power that the PlayStation has. The battles are still played out the same as the original, with 2D pixels that merely rotate back and forth to create, I guess, a sort of illusion of 3D. The only difference with the map screens that I can notice, other than that there are more of 'em, is that they have bit of a blurry look to them. The music is on par with the original, which was quite good for a Genesis game, creating a nice quick or slow-paced atmosphere, depending on what you want. Although the voiceover and sound effects could have been much better.



Overall, MoM has great depth, in terms of the amount of magics, maps and monsters it has, and offers a lot of hours of gameplay, but it doesn't capture the great feel of the original. With only a couple of new features like monster merging, a cool anime style intro and just plain more monsters and magics, I can't help feel somewhat let down.





THE BOTTOM LINE

86%

COMPATIBILITY

1 to 4 Players

BRONZE X

SHAGGY

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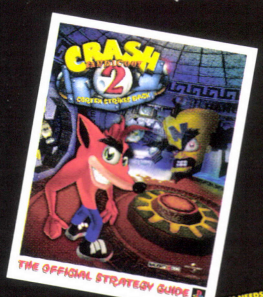


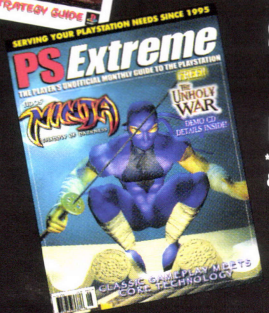
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The PS*Extreme* Historical Ranking Chart

EX*CAVATE* is the section where we dig up the last six months of our old ratings and present them on one easy-to-read page, along with a little explanation/breakdown of our rating system. Use this as your buying guide throughout the year and as a reference for those older games that you might have missed (or wish you had).

PLATINUM GAMES	ISSUE	RATING
Gran Turismo	June 1998	98%
Spyro the Dragon	October 1998	98%
NFL Gameday 99	October 1998	98%
NFL Blitz	October 1998	98%
GOLD GAMES	**ISSUE**	**RATING**
Tekken 3	May 1998	97%
Blasto	May 1998	96%
MLB 99	June 1998	96%
Parasite Eve	September 1998	94%
Einhander	May 1998	94%
NFL Xtreme	August 1998	94%
World Cup 98	July 1998	93%
N2O: Nitrous Oxide	July 1998	93%
Need for Speed III: Hot Pursuit	May 1998	93%
Tomba!	May 1998	93%
Jersey Devil	July 1998	93%
WWF WarZone	September 1998	92%
VR Baseball 99	June 1998	92%
Cardinal Syn	June 1998	92%
The Granstream Saga	July 1998	92%
Forsaken	June 1998	91%
Heart of Darkness	September 1998	90%
Kula World	September 1998	90%
G Darius	October 1998	90%
SILVER GAMES	**ISSUE**	**RATING**
Trap Gunner	October 1998	89%
Azure Dreams	July 1998	89%
Rosco McQueen	July 1998	89%
Breath of Fire 3	May 1998	89%
Turbo Prop Racing	August 1998	89%
C: The Contra Adventure	September 1998	88%
X-Men vs. Street Fighter EX Edition	May 1998	88%
Road Rash 3D	July 1998	88%
Team Losi RC Racer	October 1998	87%
Madden NFL 99	October 1998	87%
Kartia: The Word of Fate	August 1998	87%
NCAA Football 99	September 1998	86%
International Superstar Soccer Pro '98	August 1998	86%
Thunder Force V	October 1998	85%
Diablo	May 1998	85%
Elemental Gearbolt	August 1998	85%
Command & Conquer: Retailiation	October 1998	85%
Resident Evil and Resident Evil 2 Dual Shock	October 1998	84%
Vigilante 8	July 1998	84%
Grand Theft Auto	August 1998	82%
Mortal Kombat 4	August 1998	82%
Future Cop: LAPD	October 1998	82%
Devil Dice	October 1998	81%
Touring Car Championship	September 1998	81%
Pocket Fighter	August 1998	80%
BRONZE GAMES	**ISSUE**	**RATING**
Spice World	October 1998	79%
WarGames	September 1998	79%
Batman and Robin	October 1998	79%
Dark Omen	June 1998	78%
Speed Racer	May 1998	78%
Pitfall 3D	June 1998	76%
Sentinel Returns	August 1998	76%
Street Fighter Collection 2	October 1998	75%
Bottom of the 9th 99	September 1998	75%
Fox Sports Golf '99	July 1998	75%
Crime Killers	September 1998	74%
Mega Man Legends	June 1998	72%
Super Cross 98	August 1998	71%
Fox Sports Soccer '99	July 1998	71%
TIN GAMES	**ISSUE**	**RATING**
Adidas Power Soccer 98	August 1998	68%
Judge Dredd	May 1998	68%
Bio F.R.E.A.K.S.	July 1998	65%
Circuit Breakers	August 1998	49%

WHAT DO ALL THOSE NUMBERS MEAN?

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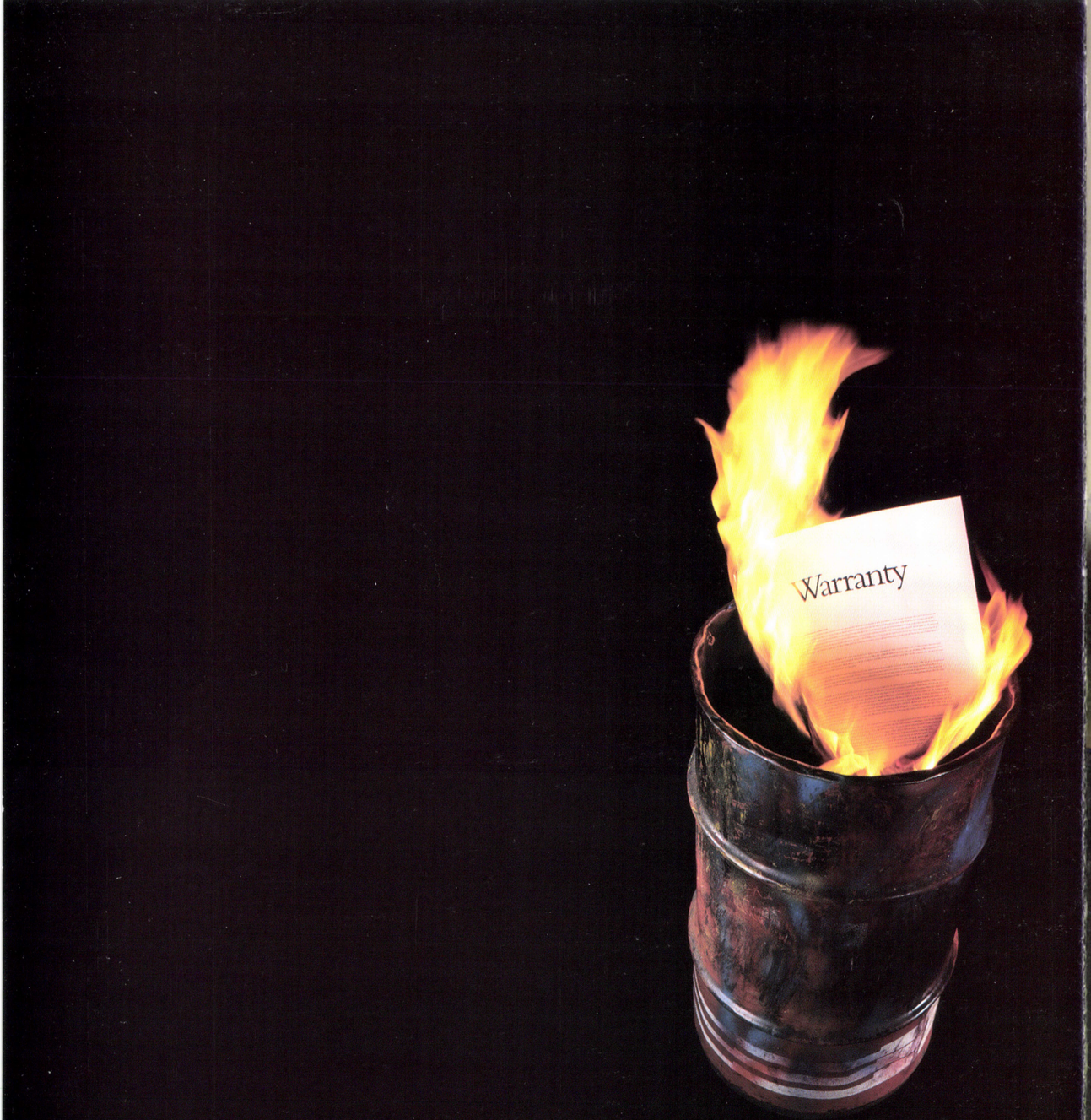
80-89%
Good games, but lacking in some area; for fans of that style of game.

70-79%
Mediocre titles that suffer from some serious flaws. Rent — don't buy.

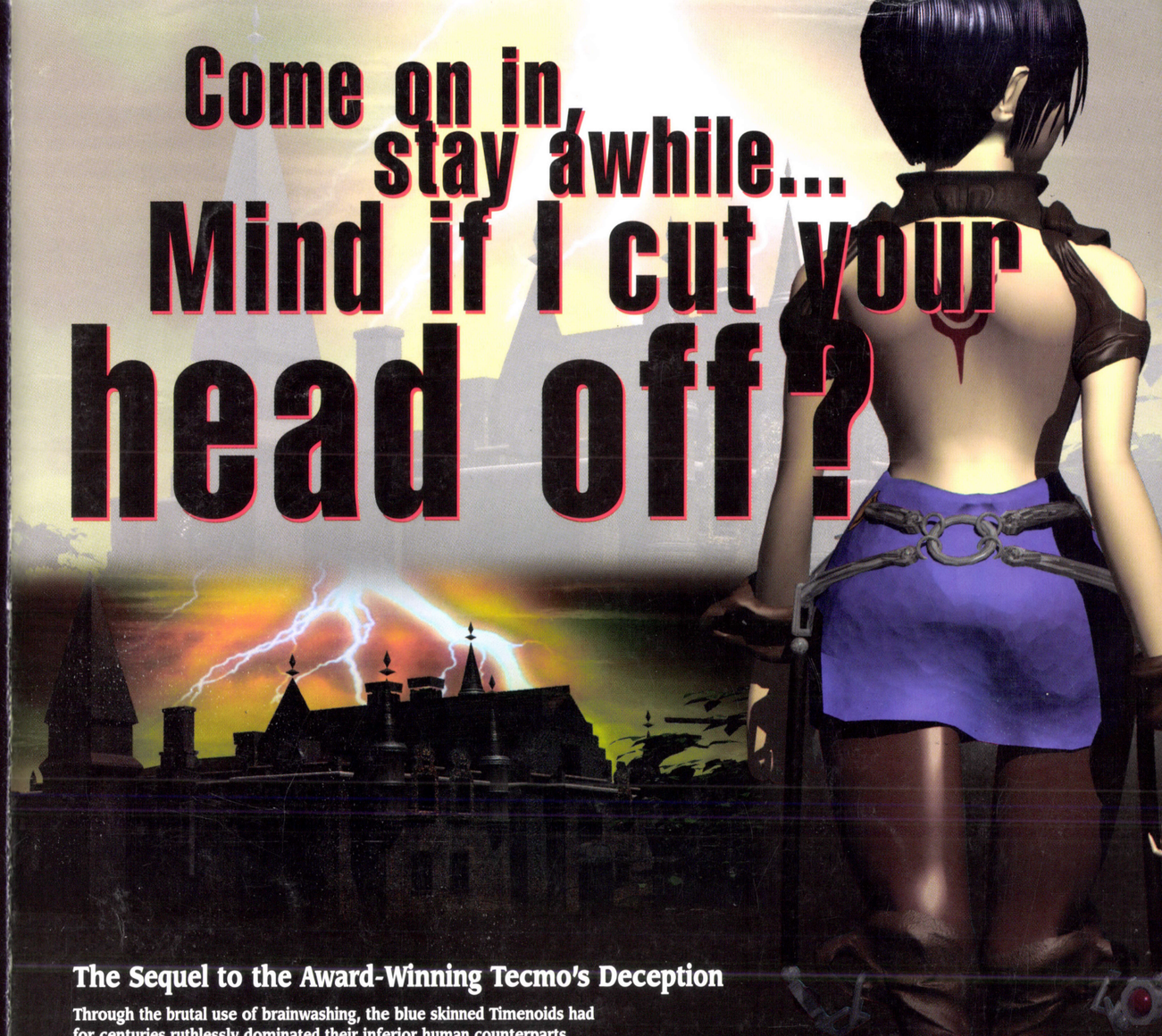
0-69%
Tin games are to be avoided at all costs. Only die-hard gamers would buy these.

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